

# American Reformers

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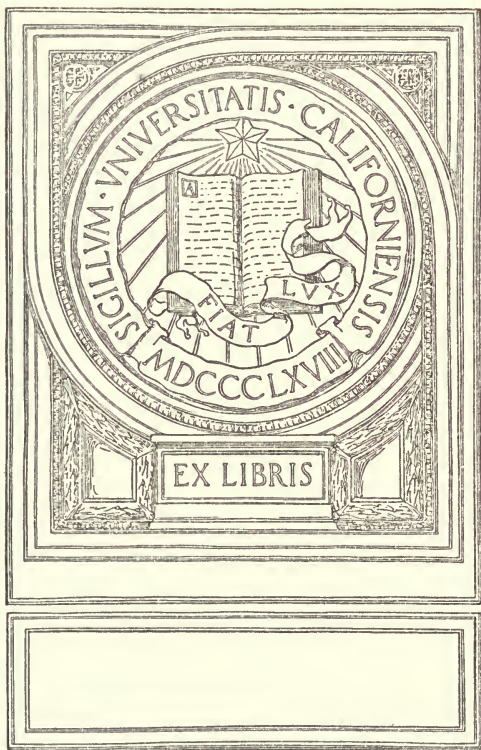
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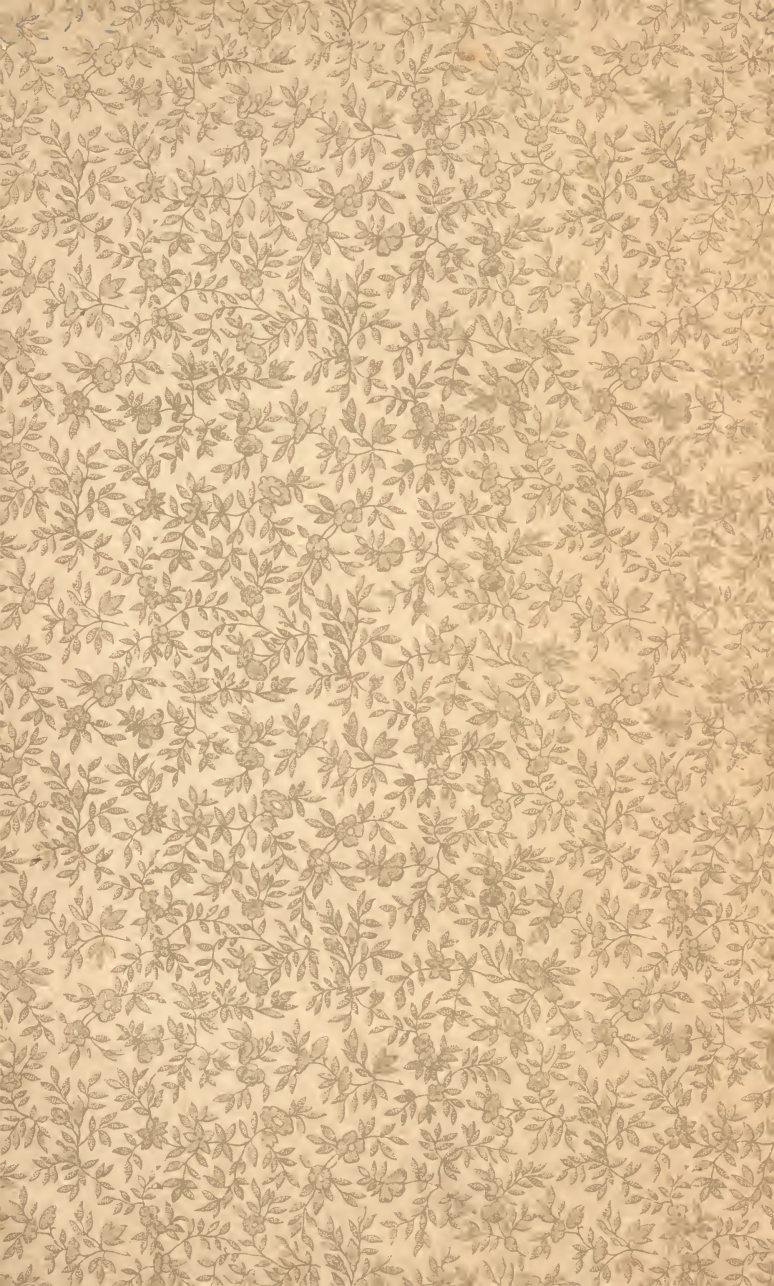
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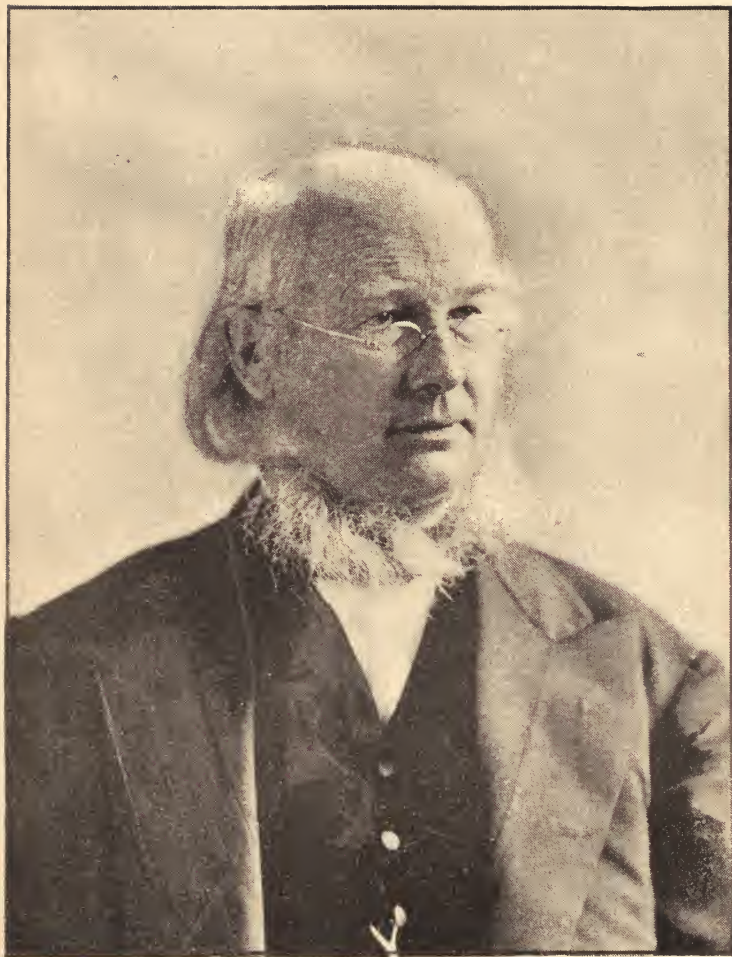


Presented by  
C. Woodhouse, M.D.

Rutland, Vt

Dec 1890.





Yours,

Horace Evedy

AMERICAN ORATORS AND  
REFORMERS.

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HORACE GREELEY,

THE EDITOR.

BY

FRANCIS NICOLL ZABRISKIE.



FUNK & WAGNALLS.

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## PREFATORY NOTE.

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THIS volume, while the most complete, does not pretend to be an exhaustive account of Horace Greeley, nor of the times and the "causes" with which he was identified, and in some of them a *magna pars*. It undertakes, however, to give a condensed, unified, and popular presentation of the man, and what he stood for in the thick of days which made history rapidly, and saw our young Republic change from the gristle of its aspiring and restless youth into its settled and not unscarred maturity.

My chief material and authority have been Mr. Greeley's own "Recollections of a Busy Life," published in 1868. Mr. James Parton's delightful *omnium gatherum* of Greeleyana, published in 1855, is, of course, a mine of wealth, especially valuable as being written under the eye and doubtless with the concurrence of Mr. Greeley himself, as St. Peter is credited with the supervision or approval of his disciple Mark's gospel. Besides these, I have availed

myself of various sketches and estimates which have appeared from time to time in the periodical press, especially at the time of his death, from those whose information and judgment made their words of the highest authority. I have consulted also letters which have been since collected, have availed myself of personal recollections by mutual friends, and drawn upon a lifetime of familiarity (though not of private acquaintance with himself) with the sayings and doings of perhaps the most incessantly active and conspicuous of Americans and New Yorkers for a generation. And, lastly, I have made good use of several works on the history and characteristics of American journalism. I wish to make special acknowledgment of the courtesy and kindness, in these researches, of the Librarians of the College of New Jersey, and of the Theological Seminary of Princeton.

PRINCETON, N. J., October 12th, 1889.

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# HORACE GREELEY.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE HOUR AND THE MAN.

THE public career of Horace Greeley exactly spans what may be called the era of transition and development in our country's history. By his public career we understand the period from his beginnings as editor in New York, in 1833, to his death, in 1872.

When, on January 1st of the former year, he made his first journalistic venture in the abortive attempt to establish a penny newspaper, the first break was made in the traditional and almost sacred idea of a journal as a slow, costly, and unwieldy vehicle of information. Up to that time the "blanket" or folio sheet, with its meagre news and occasional heavy essay by way of editorial, and its advertisements addressed to the wants of the larger dealers of the business community, distributed almost wholly to subscribers, and sold only over the counter and in business quarters at

the price of sixpence, was the type of a New York journal. Those who are familiar with the *Journal of Commerce* of to-day, or the *Courier and Enquirer* of a generation ago, will realize what we mean. The little one-cent *Morning Post*, though it soon set beneath the horizon, was the morning star of the *Sun*, the *Herald*, the *Tribune*, the *Times*, and the *World*,—all of which were not only cheap (beginning, at least, as penny papers), but were of manageable size, quivering with enterprise, abounding in brief editorials, and crowded with readable matter for the million. This process of journalistic development has been one of the most striking signs and achievements of the times, and has done more than almost any other agency to evolve and shape the America of to-day.

It was no less of an era, which was now to open, in the establishment of what is known as the independent press. By this we do not mean a neutral or even non-partisan press, but one which was not dependent for its support upon the subsidies of political cliques and parties. It had been taken for granted that no paper could be established or supported except as a party organ, absolutely controlled by the political powers in return for Government patronage, or opposition funds. The editor,

therefore, was virtually owned, as well as the paper virtually mortgaged ; he was placed there to take care of the interests of a party, a committee, or a candidate. A high authority has said : " There was no such thing as an independent paper in those days. The editors were simply party hacks, and not journalists. The *Washington Globe*, the *Richmond Enquirer*, the *Albany Argus*, were the 'thunderers,' but the *Richmond Junta*, the *Ritchie Cabinet*, and the *Albany Regency* furnished the lightning. From a few 'organs' like these the smaller papers took their cue, and followed suit to their lead." This state of things was strikingly exposed by Mackenzie's publication, in pamphlet form, of a once famous correspondence found in the New York Custom House, involving the political intrigues of the Democratic leaders of New York, the Albany Regency, for securing the support of the *Courier and Enquirer*, as well as the candid and business-like appeals of James Gordon Bennett for the pecuniary assistance of the State Committee in establishing the *Globe*, and afterward the *Pennsylvanian*.

The rebuffs which Bennett met with opened his eyes to the fact that the time was ripe for a new departure. The people had become distrustful of a hireling press and an automaton editorship, and the very party leaders and candidates were beginning to find more harm than

benefit from this system. If, as Mr. Jesse Hoyt said, "recent developments have had a tendency to satisfy the people that its conductors, or many of them at least, are as negotiable as a promissory note," it was not wonderful that "the press has lost some portion of its hold upon public confidence."

It was then that Bennett's discovery took place of "the hollow-heartedness and humbuggery of these political associations and political men;" and, "flinging himself loose from the slough," he regained his liberty and independence completely. The *Herald* appeared on May 6th, 1835, and its immediate success proved the truth of his diagnosis of the public mind, and effectually broke the spell of a slavish and purchased journalism. Six years were still to elapse before Horace Greeley was to burst the cords with which his young hands were tied, and essay the still more adventurous course of an independent party paper; but he had convinced himself by the twofold experiment of a hired pen and of an attempted political neutrality, that his time had come to join the new *régime*.

Doubtless much of the success, both of the cheaper and of the independent press, was due to the contemporary and rapid increase of facilities for circulating newspapers and for obtaining news. When the *Sun* was issued, in

trans.

1833, there were only two short railroads in the United States, one from Albany to Schenectady, and the other from Charleston to a point on the Savannah River. There were few steamboats, and those comparatively slow and infrequent. Papers had mostly to be distributed by stage-coaches and post-riders—these last being the pioneers even of the mail routes, and riding at intervals of a week or a fortnight. But the opening of more speedy transit went on rapidly from this date. The Albany and Schenectady Railroad was extended to Utica the next year. In 1835 Boston shot out roads to Lowell, Providence, and Worcester; within three or four years these two latter were extended to Stonington and to Springfield. In 1837 the Baltimore and Wilmington began the line of connection between the national capital and the Northern cities. In 1840 there were nearly four million miles of mail route by railroads and steamboats; in 1859 the number of miles had grown to nearly thirty-two millions.

It was not till 1838 that steam navigation was established between this country and Europe, the first trip of the *Sirius* and the *Great Western* taking fifteen days to cross the ocean. The foreign mails were even then received only once a fortnight; previously they had been dependent on wind and weather. Even by the fast steamboats of the Hudson,

so late as 1844, it was sometimes a week before the election returns were sufficiently received to determine the result in the State of New York. The magical era of the telegraph was not far in the future—Morse completing his line between Washington and Baltimore on May 27th, 1844. Submarine telegraphs began to be successfully worked under various rivers and bays even earlier; in 1851 cables were laid between Calais and Dover, and in August, 1858, the Atlantic cable united Europe and America. It was on the threshold of this stirring and marvellous period of development that the subject of our biography was privileged to begin his editorial career, and to keep pace with it in the evolution of American journalism.

Our country was still in its callow but inquiring youth. The people, from the circumstances of their early immigration, their adventurous struggles to establish themselves in a vast wilderness secluded from the Old World, their successful emancipation from the mother country, their national organization under untried conditions, were naturally disposed to pay none too great respect to precedent, and to consider all the facts and relations of life subject to a new investigation and to an oftentimes crude and rash experimenting. These experiments and speculations included the food that



was eaten, the liquor that was drunk, the relations of the sexes, the question of master and servant, the whole fabric of society, the fundamental doctrines, and even the essential truth, of Christianity itself. All the circumstances of birth and training and early experience were such as to make Horace Greeley's development almost a parallel with that of the country, and to constitute him in the truest sense a "Young America." And accordingly we are not surprised to find him nibbling successively at nearly every tentative reform, and embracing zealously and with constancy two or three of them ; above all, making their free exposition and discussion the most distinctive feature of his paper. This hospitality to recent or eccentric thought arose not more from sympathy than from a genuine journalistic instinct, which was intent upon the widest publication of the newest ideas as of the newest facts.

The period of Horace Greeley's *début* in editorial life was also synchronous with the opening up of a new departure in American politics. The great name of Washington alone sufficed to maintain the Federal Party in power for a single Presidential term after his retirement, or to even preserve it in existence for a generation. When James Monroe was re-elected to the Presidency, in 1820, with a single

dissenting electoral vote, there was only one party in the United States. But this famous era of good feeling, so placid on the surface, was a boiling caldron of intrigues, ambitions, and jealousies between rival chieftains and their factions, underneath. The partisans of Adams, Jackson, Crawford, Clay, and Calhoun were about to play the *rôle* of Alexander's successors in dividing up the imperial political legacy of the Republican Party. The result of the election of John Quincy Adams by the House of Representatives, in 1825, through a combination of his forces with those of Henry Clay, intensified and embittered the strife, though no attempt was made during his administration to create a distinct party. Politics consisted for several years in the personal issue of Jackson and anti-Jackson.

But President Jackson's second election, in 1832, found an opposition party arrayed under the leadership of Henry Clay, calling themselves Whigs, and with a platform that took issue with the Democratic creed which the political genius of Martin Van Buren had formulated, as it had also completely organized the party itself. It was during this second term that the battle was fully joined between the two great forces, upon such economic issues as the Tariff, the National Bank, Internal Improvements, and the Public Lands, which constituted the polit-

ical tenets of the Whigs for the years during which they were able to resist the remorseless progress within their ranks of the divisive and dynamitic slavery question. The training and the tendencies of Horace Greeley, and particularly his intense admiration of "Harry" Clay, drew him irresistibly into the Whig Party, to whose championship he devoted the earliest efforts of his editorial pen at the critical hour when, in 1835, the battle was rolling up to defeat the election of Martin Van Buren as the successor of Andrew Jackson.

The founders of this Republic, in their anxiety to obtain the consent of all sections to the Constitution and the Union, were fain to admit a compromise upon one point, which they little realized would prove an agonizing and almost deadly gall-stone in the very vitals of the country. It would have suited the great majority of the convention, North and South, not to recognize the existence of American slavery, and to prohibit at once the African slave-trade. But the extreme Southern States, South Carolina and Georgia, took such a determined stand, that it was deemed necessary to exempt the slave-trade from interference for twenty years, to recognize the slaves as a basis of political power and apportionment, and to provide for the return of fugitives to their

masters by the Federal authority. Some of the Southern States only consented to ratify the Constitution upon the condition that no regulation of Congress should tend to the emancipation of slaves, and that the ordinance of 1787, prohibiting slavery in the Northwestern Territory, should not be extended to the Southwestern Territory, or to the admission of Southern States. This question of admitting slave States, however, could not be suppressed on the application of Missouri, in 1818; and after a struggle of two years another compromise, admitting Missouri without restriction, but excluding slavery forever from all territory north and west of its southern boundary.

From this time till 1835 (mark the date, in connection with the career of our hero) the subject of slavery was a very insignificant factor in the politics of the nation, and there was a general consent to acquiesce in the *status quo* as a final settlement. Here and there the conscience of a Lundy or a Garrison would not let him rest, and abolition societies kept the subject from being forgotten. There was even a show of organization, which escaped much tribulation only because it was regarded as too insignificant to be persecuted. The anti-slavery feeling of the North chiefly embodied itself in the mild and equivocal form of the

Colonization movement. Up to this time even Horace Greeley held sentiments of a thoroughly conservative kind, having little sympathy and less connection with the agitators, and deprecating a third party as calculated to weaken the Whigs, whom he regarded as the only effective resistance to the aggressions of the slave power.

These aggressions, however, were now taking shapes which could no longer be ignored, and which startled him, together with a large portion of the Northern people, into a moral and political sensitiveness that was to be the turn of the tide in the rapid development of our history. One of these was the assassination of Owen Lovejoy, a Congregational minister and editor in Alton, Ill., by a mob, which had already driven him out of Missouri. This hounding down and murder of a man for his anti-slavery teachings in a free State awoke multitudes to a realization, that there could be no terms on which a free and a slave-holding people could get on together, except the virtual enslavement of the latter. Just at this time, also, opened the first scene of the great Texas drama by the invasion of that Mexican province by "Sam" Houston, with the slightly disguised intent of seizing and annexing it as an enlargement of the area of the slave power,—all of which resulted, according to

arrangement, in a rapid series of like movements in less than a dozen years. At least, in this predetermined light did the awakened and prophetic eye of young Greeley regard them. And henceforth he took his place as one of the foremost, and probably the most effective, antagonists of the great aggression, which—over the wreck of the Missouri Compromise, and through its defeat in the Kansas-Nebraska struggle—organized against itself first a political and then an armed resistance, under whose blows the serpent's head was forever crushed. Of the subsequent history of reconstruction and reconciliation, we need only say here that Mr. Greeley's part was probably the most conspicuous of any American, and, notwithstanding his personal mistakes and failures, was probably the most effective in healing the gaping wounds of Civil War—a service of which he may justly be regarded alike as the pioneer and the martyr.

It is, therefore, no exaggeration to say that the career of Horace Greeley not only marks a new epoch in the journalism of this country, but that "he presents an extraordinary illustration both of the spirit of the age and the genius of American institutions. In another country, or at a previous date, his history would have been well-nigh impossible. He



was born, it would seem, at the precise epoch which demanded such natural endowments as his, and in a state of society which made them almost instantly available." The man was meant and fitted for the hour. He would be an anachronism now, as would be Daniel Boone in Kentucky, or George Rogers Clarke in Illinois, or John Carver in Massachusetts.

## CHAPTER II.

### EARLY DAYS.

HORACE GREELEY came of a stock as likely to produce a sound and sturdy growth as any in the world,—that of the Scotch-Irish of Ulster, transplanted to the rocky soil and free air of the Northern New England hills. He was not insensible to the pride of ancestry, in the noblest sense, and loved to trace his descent from the stanch Protestants of Ulster and the heroes of Londonderry. An emigration from that city and its vicinity, embracing a considerable part of four congregations, with their ministers, impelled by ecclesiastical oppressions and disabilities, arrived at Boston on August 4th, 1718. After various explorations and experiments, they finally settled upon a tract of land about fifteen miles north of Haverhill, N. H., which they promptly and proudly re-christened from Nutfield to Londonderry. Among the settlers was John Woodburn, the grandfather of Horace Greeley's mother ; his descendants are still, we believe, occupying the homestead, and the community retains to a remarkable degree its

primitive elements of character, simplicity of life, and rural occupation. During the Revolutionary War, this little town furnished its "embattled farmers" to the number of three hundred and forty-seven out of a whole adult male population of about five hundred.

On his father's side, Horace Greeley derived his descent from one of three brothers of that name who emigrated to America in 1640. Zaccheus, Horace's great-grandfather, settled on the verge of Londonderry, into the bounds of which town his son Zaccheus removed to within a hundred rods of the Woodburns. Hence it was natural that the third Zaccheus should marry Mary Woodburn, the mother of our hero, their third out of seven children. He had the felicity to escape the Biblical patronymic, though the classic name which was given him suggests not a little in the way of humorous contrast, when closely examined. It were difficult to conceive of two more diverse personalities than the tuneful, cultured, self-indulgent, parasitic Roman, and the ungainly, rough-spoken, hard-worked, independent New Englander. I think they would have liked each other none the less, however.

It was not in Londonderry that our Horace was born, on February 3d, 1811, but in the neighboring town of Amherst, to which his parents had removed three years before. Here

Zaccheus Greeley had purchased the "Stewart farm" of forty or fifty acres, a gravelly and rocky bit of land, more adapted to hard work than to plentiful or certain crops. The house in which Horace was born was an unpainted framed cottage of one story, built in the box-like style of shapeless ugliness which succeeded the rather picturesque log-cabin of the earliest settlers. Its immediate environment was a rude and straggling fence, an old-fashioned well, with its mossy bucket swinging high in air upon its long sweep, and a soil out of which the rocks thrust themselves in every direction. There were "the orchard, the meadow, and deep tangled wildwood" of the song; but the former, though of the same rocky substratum as the rest, produced apples which made Horace's mouth water long years after. (I suppose we all think there never were such apples as the apples of our youth.) The meadow was chiefly a frog-pond, where the boy doubtless learned to take aim at the croakers and slippery divers of the social and political puddle of a later day. The house was then quite new, he says; "it was only modified in our time by filling up and making narrower the old-fashioned fireplace, which having devoured all the wood on the farm yawned ravenously for more."

That voracious fireplace seems to have been

typical of the general fortunes of the ancestral Greeleys. They were "excellent, though never thrifty citizens; kind, mild, easy-going, honest, and unambitious," marrying young and blessed with large families of children (the grandfather having had thirteen, who all grew to be men and women). We can readily trace, then, the source of one side of their illustrious descendant's composite and inconsistent nature to the paternal stock—his gentle and even childlike qualities, his expansive benevolence, his carelessness of outward appearance, his unambitious social disposition, his unthrifty business and money habits.

It was in spite of these that the qualities inherited from his mother led him on to success and even to fortune, in the pecuniary sense of that word. She was of a masculine hardihood of body, intellect, and character; of cheerful and untiring industry, working out-doors as well as in-doors; and a humorist, endowed with a constant flow of animal spirits. It is reported of her that she "could out-rake any man in the town, and could load the hay-wagon as fast and as well as her husband. While doing more than the work of an ordinary man and an ordinary woman combined, she would laugh and sing all day long, and tell stories all the evening." She was a great favorite especially with the children, whom she

delighted with an inexhaustible stock of stories and songs, and old-country ballads and traditions, derived from her immigrant grandmother. It was this latter source from which her little Horace derived his first educational impulse, as he stood beside her while she plied her spinning-wheel. She was also his first teacher in the more prosaic "rudiments." Horace was a feeble, sickly child, often under medical treatment, and unable to watch through a closed window the falling of rain without incurring an instant and violent attack of illness. She was particularly tender of him from the fact of having lost her two previous children just before his birth. Hence he was kept close to her side ; and from the spelling-book on her knee he learned to read, as well as to be entertained, before he could fairly talk, and at an earlier period than he could remember in his later years. By a singular adaptation to the changes of motion on his mother's part while spinning, he acquired the unwonted facility of reading with the book in almost any position, sidewise or upside down, as readily as in the usual fashion, without at that time thinking it anything unusual. He read also in the great family Bible, spread upon the floor for his behoof, and even in the newspaper with a prophetic interest. By the time he was three years old he read children's books with ease,



and at four he was free of the whole range of literature as far as it came under his eye.

Two months before he reached three, he was taken home by his grandfather Woodburn and sent to school from there—the school-house at home being two miles away, while that of his grandfather's district was a few rods from the door. Here he lived for most of the time during the next three years, and probably absorbed still more of the stalwart Woodburn characteristics. The school-house was even more destitute of architecture than his home. The type has not yet disappeared, even in the thriving rural districts near the great towns in our most advanced Eastern States. It was a single enclosed room with three cuttings for windows, two on the side and one in the front or gable end, where was also the door. There were no trees or fence about it, and the interior was as "forlorn and uninviting" as the exterior. Happy the child who has not had to sit from nine till four upon those hard benches, without backs, except so far as the sharp edge of the desks along the walls afforded at times a support to a few aching and otherwise stooping little spines. The school-house was crowded to suffocation, and was in winter either scorching or freezing, in accordance with the relative position of its inmates to the fireplace. The curriculum consisted of



spelling, reading, writing, grammar, and arithmetic, the three latter of a very elementary grade. The teachers were usually very young, under their teens, getting about the wages of a farm-laborer. The discipline was of the most heroic character, administered over the knuckles by the ferule, or over the hindmost parts by the switch or "gad."

Horace Greeley was from the beginning the pet and pride of his school. He was a tow-headed little fellow, with a quaint manner and a lisping and whining voice, always good-humored, and "enduring all things" with a non-resistant gentleness which was recognized as neither cowardice nor lack of character. He was considered a prodigy of precocious acquisition. His especial *forte* was spelling. It seemed to be a natural taste and instinct. It became in those days a passion, betokening the future editor, who discovered the slightest deviation from his rules of orthography or punctuation, and treated it with corresponding severity. He drilled himself continually in those primary school-days, and even spent much time in spelling hard words for the pleasure of it, or to meet the frequent challenge of his family. Constant efforts were made in vain to puzzle him, even with the proper names of the Bible. In the weekly evening spelling-matches, he was always the first one chosen by

the side which had the "toss," and it was regarded as equivalent to victory in advance. He was then so young, that he would often have to be wakened before it came to his turn.

He was also fond of speaking pieces out of the "Columbian Orator," even before he could utter the words distinctly, and his frequent and favorite speech, "You'd scarce expect one of my age," etc., in his self-possessed and confident manner, was a source of much amusement. He knew the whole volume by heart, and it was to his great disgust that he was dragged forward incessantly to recite those baby lines. Besides the "Columbian Orator," the school-books of that day consisted of Webster's spelling-book, which was just supplanting Dilworth's; "The American Preceptor;" and Caleb Bingham's "The Ladies' Accidence," the only grammar then in use, "as poor an affair as its name would indicate." Morse's "Geography" had not yet come into vogue, and had barely one map. Lindley Murray's "Grammar and English Reader" had not yet come into fashion, nor had Adams's "Arithmetic;" the former, at any rate, was not well adapted to beginners, and Mr. Greeley thinks that Greenleaf, a few years later, "shortened the time and effort required to gain a decent knowledge of English grammar by at least one half."

Horace was an omnivorous reader from his

fourth year, devouring, like the locust, every dry twig as well as green blade of print to which he could get access. It mattered little whether it was the "Confession of Faith," a stray almanac, the "Pilgrim's Progress," the "Arabian Nights" or "Robinson Crusoe," a book of history, the Bible, or the weekly newspaper. We are told that there was scarcely a book within seven miles which he did not borrow. He would read as he dressed in the morning, in every spare moment he could gain from other studies or from home and farm work throughout the day, and even as he went about on the lighter errands of the latter, clinging to his book like a wasp to a mellow harvest apple. His evenings were spent in a veritable trance of reading, lying coiled up in the corner of the capacious fireplace by the light of a pine-knot, paying no attention to those who purposely or inadvertently stumbled over him or dragged him out by the legs, but rolling himself back and going on with his reading as if nothing had happened. It took as long to arouse him and get him off to bed as it takes many a body to get out of bed in the morning.

The newspaper was his chief delight—a poor enough affair in its scope of news or editorial ; but its advent was the event of the week, which he would anticipate by walking down the road

to meet the post-rider that he might have the first chance at it, and lying on the ground would absorb its contents from beginning to end. Meagre as was its intelligence, those were stirring times, as Mr. Parton reminds us. The ground-swell of the War of 1812 had not yet subsided. "He may have read of Decatur's gallantry in the war with Algiers; of Wellington's victory at Waterloo; of Napoleon, fretting away his life on the rock of St. Helena; of Monroe's inauguration; of the dismantling of the fleets on the great lakes; of the progress of the Erie Canal project; of Jackson's inroads into Florida and the subsequent secession of that province to the United States; of the first meeting of Congress in the Capitol; of the passage of the Missouri Compromise," together with the important and fundamental discussions of Congress over the various commercial treaties with the States of Europe. The first book which he read consecutively through was the Bible, under the guidance of his mother, when he was about five years old.

Horace never neglected his regular studies for other reading, much less for sports. When neighbor boys called in the evenings, he could neither be coaxed nor forced into play till he had gotten his lessons. He was not averse to fun, and was fond of fishing, though never a

leader or expert in boyish games, and shrinking from those that were rude and brutal. He was a non-combatant from his childhood, and while not devoid of spirit as well as spirits, he was singularly amiable and gentle, having no enemies and being a universal pet, though his old-fashioned ways and remarks were a constant source of amusement. He was timid in the matter of noises and gunpowder and belligerent demonstrations on the part of other boys. He would run away at the former, but would stand his ground and take the assaults of the latter without a show of returning them. His moral courage was undaunted in such things as ghosts or in the dark; and his self-confidence in speaking, or reciting his lessons, or questioning the dicta of teachers and older persons, was absurdly sublime. Very seldom has the well-worn saying of Wordsworth, that "the child is father of the man," been more strikingly illustrated.

This precocity and promise were not unnoted nor unappreciated. Several incidents may be adduced in proof. He was allowed to attend the Bedford school, though out of his district, by an express vote of the trustees that "no pupils should be received from any other town, except Horace Greeley alone"! An offer was made by the leading men of his neighborhood, during his last summer in Am-

herst, to defray the expense of sending him to Phillips Academy at Exeter, and thence to college. His parents, after full deliberation, firmly declined, and, though not having any decided opinion himself at the time, Horace Greeley expressed in later life his gratitude at not having been indebted for what imperfect schooling he had to any except those from whom he had a right to expect it. It may well be a question whether this independence of spirit was not carried to a morbid extreme. But certain it is that we should have had a very different life of Horace Greeley to write—whether for better or worse we care not to conjecture. He received assistance, however, from a friendly clergyman, who supplemented his grammatical attainments, and a retired sea-captain, who lent him books and conducted a continuous examination of the boy in geography, history, and spelling, and upon the contents of the books which he had been reading.

When we consider the few incentives, as well as helps, in that secluded and rustic neighborhood, it is certainly very remarkable that this one poor and hard-worked boy should have sprouted up in that sterile and ungenial soil, like the edelweiss among the icy rocks of the Alps. No wonder that the Londonderry minister, having heard of the little fellow's school

achievements, after taking an occasion to examine him when they met out in the fields, and vainly trying to puzzle him, should have given the emphatic testimony: "Mark my words, Mr. Woodburn, that boy was not made for nothing."



## CHAPTER III.

### TRAINING AND TRAMPING.

IN his son's tenth year, Zaccheus Greeley's financial affairs reached a crisis. The times were hard (Horace ascribed them in later life to a lack of protection to home industry, and says, "I have never been much of a free-trader since"). When "almost every one was hopelessly involved, and every third farm was in the sheriff's hand," it is not surprising that the never fore-handed man had to be sold out, and passed from a landed proprietor to the position of a hired farm laborer at fifty cents a day, and a small house in the township of Westhaven, Vt., about a hundred miles distant from Amherst, and six miles from Lake Champlain. They were beginning the world anew so thoroughly that they had not even beds enough, or any adequate stock of the commonest utensils, or clothes beyond what they wore upon their backs, and were in debt for the full amount even of these. Their extreme poverty is illustrated by the picture of the children gathered on the floor about their supper of bean-porridge, served in a milk-pan and

conveyed from the common receptacle to each mouth by a spoon, the parents having a pan to themselves on the table at which they sat. Yet they managed thenceforth always to have enough of rye bread, meal and meat, and a little money to pay the school rates, to keep out of debt, and, best of all, to feel their need of nothing. They were cheerful, contented, and indifferent to "looks" or mere conventionalities. The father was then thirty-eight, and the mother thirty-three years old ; and Horace, the oldest surviving child, was ten.

He was now called to make study his secondary pursuit, and to aid his father in hard outdoor work. This consisted for two years in clearing a fifty-acre wood lot a mile away. It was a formidable task, especially to their inexperience and the boy's immature physical development. But the whole family went at it with a will, the father chopping the larger logs, and the two eldest boys the smaller ones and driving the oxen, while the mother and daughters gathered the light wood into heaps ; in the log-rolling, they would all put their shoulders to the task. "Still," says Horace in after years, "clearing land is pleasant work, especially when you have a hundred heaps of logs or brush burning at once on a dark, windy night ; while ten or twenty acres of fallen, leafy timber on fire at once affords a magnifi-

cent spectacle." He also recalls a good spring of water close by, and plenty of rattlesnakes, who fortunately did not take the hint of meddling with the boys' bare feet, as they worked among the brush and weeds. They were a merry and harmonious company.

The third year was spent in running a saw-mill on shares, combined with working a little place bearing the suggestive and unpromising name of Flea Knoll. The whole undertaking was a dead failure, the chief acquisition being fever and ague on the part of the whole family ; and, like every preceding family so far as heard from, they beat a precipitate retreat from Flea Knoll the next spring. Returning to their former place, they spent the next two years in clearing land and cultivating land on shares, with the usual result of failure and misfortune. Nothing, however, could repress the Greeley family's capacity of enjoying life, or young Horace's faculty for self-improvement. If they could, indeed, "extract sunbeams from turnips," he could cultivate the turnip on an iceberg. He had completely absorbed all that the Westhaven schools could furnish, and took to asking questions which were beyond the capacity of his instructors, who gave notice that he was "wiser than his teachers," and that it was useless for him to go to school any more. Accordingly

he set up his pine knots at home, and ravaged these "fresh fields and pastures new" for books. He received especial assistance from having the freedom of a considerable library at the "Mansion House" of the landed proprietor for whom his father worked.

By his eleventh year he had read Shakespeare, and by his fourteenth had read the principal histories and poets accessible. The last two departments of literature were his favorites, always excepting newspapers. Besides Shakespeare, he was fond of Byron and Campbell, and would read them by the hour. His discovery of a copy of "Mrs. Hemans," in his eleventh year, was an era in his mental development. As he himself expresses it: "I remember, as of yesterday, the gradual unfolding of the exceeding truthfulness and beauty, the profound heart-knowledge, which characterizes Mrs. Hemans's poems, upon my own immature, unfolding mind." He specifies several (among them the immortal "Casabianca") as "gems of priceless value, as spirit-wands by whose electric touch countless hearts were first made conscious of the diviner aspirations, the loftier, holier energies within them." We here trace clearly the awakening of that vein of sentiment and that florid style which seem so singular and even inconsistent in the usual robustness and plainness of his opinions and writings.

Horace Greeley's apprenticeship to farming closed with his fifteenth year. We have dwelt thus minutely upon this phase of his "training" because we find in it the sufficient cause of many of his qualities and characteristics as a man. It will account for his shambling and clodhopper gait, so often observed in boys brought up to the manual drudgery of farm work as it used to be before the days of machines. It will account, also, for the fact that he never could acquire "manners," and was a rustic, and outwardly a boor, to the end of his life. Above all, it will account for his utter indifference to, and incapacity for clothes. In the Westhaven days, the family were all clothed in home-made garments made out of a coarse homespun linsey-woolsey material dyed with butternut bark. Horace's usual dress in summer consisted of very short pantaloons of the above material, an unbuttoned tow shirt and a torn straw hat, supplemented in the winter by a jacket and shoes. It is stated that his clothing did not cost three dollars a year. Mr. Parton thinks that, up to his coming of age, "not fifty dollars in all were expended upon his dress!" We need not say that he was training, in this severe school, for his peculiar mission to clear the forests of difficulty in many directions, to stub up the roots of old traditions in many a wider field, to endure hardship with

a steady perseverance and an uncomplaining spirit, and to be unwittingly used as a drudge by those who were more wily and selfish.

While only in his fifth or sixth year, Horace was told by a blacksmith, who observed the interest with which the child gazed at his work at the forge, that he had better come and learn the trade with him. The response was instant and decided, "No, I'm going to be a printer." The making of books and newspapers seemed infinitely better work than the making of horse-shoes, especially as his distinction between the authorship of the intellectual and of the mechanical parts of these was probably rather confused at that time. When only eleven years old he undertook to realize his dream. Hearing that an apprentice was wanted in the newspaper office at Whitehall, about five miles away, he applied for it in person, accompanied by his father, though the latter went under protest. He was (he says "properly") rejected on account of his youth, but it was a sore disappointment.

He did not attempt it again till he was fifteen years old, when he answered an advertisement of the publishers of the *Northern Spectator* at East Poultney, Vt., now a small and decayed, but at that time quite enterprising, village about eleven miles distant. Its enter-

prise was illustrated by the fact of its having a newspaper maintained as a stock company by the citizens. The manager was a Mr. Amos Bliss, and the scene of Horace's application is graphically told by him. He was in his garden, when his attention was drawn by a thin and whining voice behind him asking if he was "the man that carried on the printing-office," and whether he "didn't want a boy to learn the trade." Mr. Bliss then turned questioner, asking, with no little astonishment at the uncouth, outlandishly clad, slim-bodied, and large-headed youth before him, "Do *you* want to learn to print?" The "Down-East" reply was, "I've had some notion of it." He asked some further questions about the boy's schooling and reading, to which the answer was that he had read "a little of most everything." Mr. Bliss was a school inspector, whose special business of examining teachers had made him an expert as well as given him a taste for asking questions, which art he now proceeded to put in practice. The result was that he soon discovered "a mind of no common order and an acquired intelligence far beyond his years," together with "a single-mindedness, a truthfulness, and common-sense," which commanded both his respect and regard.

In the same manner were the unfavorable prepossessions of the foreman in the printing-



office overcome by a little conversation ; and Horace was made supremely happy by an offer to take him as an apprentice, conditional upon his father's consent. This, however, was not readily obtained in the subsequent interview and negotiations, for the elder Greeley was reluctant to have his son forsake the immemorial occupation of his family, and had an independent aversion to the " binding out " of any of his children, as well as to the terms,—so that he actually declared the transaction at an end, and started to go home. But the boy was desperate at the prospect of this chance slipping out of his eager grasp, and induced his father to remain and reopen the business ; and at length a compromise was effected, whereby he was to remain till twenty years of age, be allowed only his board for six months, and thereafter forty dollars a year in addition " for his clothing." He seemed to take to typesetting by intuition, and before the end of the first day could do better and quicker work than many an apprentice of several weeks' standing.

This proved a capital place for an apprentice who had a will to work hard, and a desire to learn every branch of the printer's business. The company was a financial failure, the editor left, the management was loose, the force in the printing department was very small, and each one was at liberty to do whatever he

wished, even to the writing of original paragraphs and news items. He was kindly treated, and received increased pay, but he could scarcely recall a day in which they were not hurried in their work. He had no time for even a day's fishing or hunting, nor for a game of ball ; still less did he take time for " a dance or any sort of party or fandango." But he always found time for reading. There were plenty of books at his disposal in Poultney, besides a circulating library. He records that he never afterward found books, and the opportunity to enjoy them, so ample, and he thinks that he never before or since read to so much profit. He occasionally varied his evening reading with a game of checkers, of which he was very fond and proficient, or of chess, and even of cards, though the latter were regarded as an abomination in those primitive communities ; he never, however, would gamble or play on Sunday.

He took a great interest and a leading part in the debating society. He soon, in fact, became the acknowledged leader of the whole coterie of village orators and statesmen who composed the Lyceum. Here " he was a real giant," is the testimony of one of his contemporaries. He was always ready with the part assigned him, and never lost his self-confidence in encountering any audience or antag-

onist. He took the debates very seriously, and contended as for cherished and essential truth. His prodigious and exact memory gave him a great advantage. He came to be regarded as an authority on mooted questions, and, though a mere stripling, was always listened to with the deference paid to a man, and to the best of them. He never lost his temper nor got the ill-will of those whom he floored in debate, or whose statements, quotations, or omissions he corrected. His manner was awkward in the extreme, but he was fluent and interesting always. "In short," says this authority, "he spoke in his sixteenth year just as he spoke" in middle life; and when he came back in those days to lecture, "I thought I saw before me the Horace Greeley of the old Poultney 'Forum,' as we called it." His outward appearance, however uncouth still, must have changed for the better, inasmuch as he never made any preparation for the Lyceum, other than putting a jacket over his open shirt. Otherwise he wore attire composed of no more pieces and of very little better quality than on the Westhaven farm.

But before the five years were over, the *Northern Spectator* had to stop, the printing-office was discontinued, and Horace Greeley was sent forth upon the highways of life again to seek his fortune, and to find his niche.

Meanwhile, and only a short time after he began his apprenticeship, his father had left Westhaven and settled in the town of Wayne, on the State line between Pennsylvania and New York, but within the boundaries of Erie County in the former State. He here possessed himself of two or three hundred acres of heavily wooded land, with four acres of clearing, and a log hut. In paying the family at that time a farewell visit, Horace was almost induced by his tender-heartedness at parting with them to reconsider his resolve to go on with his new vocation. But his mother characteristically refrained from adding her word to the urgencies of the rest of the family ; if she had, he says it might have overcome his resolution. Even after he was well on his way, he was strongly tempted to turn back ; and he pronounces that walk to Poultney one of the slowest and saddest of his life.

His departure from Poultney was an event in the short and simple annals of that little hamlet. Everybody regretted the loss of so bright an ornament of their literary circles, and of one whose gentle and virtuous character had won universal respect and affection. The kindly Boniface with whom he had boarded, and one of the other guests, presented him with an overcoat—old, but a very comfortable thing for a foot traveller to have in the morn-

ings and evenings, even in summer. A *white* overcoat does not seem to have become a prime essential yet. His landlady gave him the wherewithal to warm his heart, a pocket Bible.

His footsteps were first directed to his father's house, though not in any wise as a prodigal returned, notwithstanding that his outward appearance might have awakened the suspicions of those who passed him on the road,—particularly his sore leg, which he had injured three years before in stepping from a box, and which the posture of a type-setter had prevented from healing. It swelled “prodigiously” at times, and of course affected his walking; and therefore it ought to be taken into consideration when we are inclined to be critical of his shambling and breaking-down gait in after life. It was a long time before the wound was healed, by the use of electricity, leaving a long red scar for life. It might have gone hard with him, his physician said, if it had not been for his strictly temperate habits. With “lifts” from wagons and boats, he made his way along the Champlain canal and lake to Troy, and by the Erie canal to Buffalo, by Lake Erie to Dunkirk, and thence across to Chautauqua County to his father's place, which was just opposite Clymer in that county. This shabby and shambling figure was the very reverse of a prodigal. His exceeding scantiness

and inexpensiveness in dress were due not to self-indulgence, but to the fact that now, and all through his apprenticeship, and years after, his meagre income was squeezed to the utmost that he might send every possible dollar to his struggling and debt-burdened father. Shabbiness and semi-nakedness become a royal purple under the light of such a fact.

After spending several weeks at home, he sought work at his trade in various directions, finding a little at Jamestown, and then at Lodi, in Cattaraugus County, N. Y. But the jobs he found were so temporary and the pay so small and precarious, that he actually went home, and tested once more his unfitness for a pioneer life and for chopping wood. Resolving to try the little village printing-offices no longer, he pushed across the country and through the woods to Erie, Pa., thirty miles away, on the shores of Lake Erie. It was quite a large and busy town, with two printing-offices, one of which published a weekly paper called the *Erie Gazette*. Here, notwithstanding his usual disadvantage, resulting from his unprepossessing appearance (for he still wore the Westhaven costume already described, and had not at all improved his grace of gait and manner), he obtained employment at fifteen dollars a month. Mr. Sterrett, the proprietor, at first rejected him as too obviously "green" a hand,

misled also by his modest replies as to his qualifications, and suspecting him to be a runaway apprentice ; so poor Horace walked disconsolately and almost despairingly home, having been refused also at the other office of the town. But by one of the acts of a singular and kind providence, a neighbor of his father's happened to see Mr. Sterrett, and inquired casually whether he wanted an apprentice. On receiving an affirmative answer he mentioned Horace Greeley, and was so successful in combating the objections that the boy was given a fair trial, and was taken into the office and as a boarder at his employer's house.

It is one of the saddest and most unfortunate things in life that so many people are controlled by their "first impressions," and usually in proportion to the superficiality of those impressions. This "prodigal" and tramp needed only a closer look under the homespun, bare-legged, scanty, and unfitting wardrobe, and the old slouchy hat on the extreme back of his head, to discover a face of singular beauty and purity of expression, and a finely developed head ; and closer questioning would as speedily show that he carried more on his shoulders than the red handkerchief tied to a stick. That large brain-case, too large then for his tall and slender body, carried a library of knowledge minutely re-



tained by his tenacious memory, a thorough acquaintance with his craft, and a mature and teeming thought. Horace Greeley's experience should stand as a pathetic appeal to us to be more like God, who "judgeth not by the outward appearance," especially when there is no "judgment" exercised at all. The very simplicity of his guileless countenance was turned against him by persons who pronounced him "an idiot" on the spot. There was no deformity for their excuse, as in the case of the late Dr. Wisner, of Lockport, who became so used to be so judged that he rather enjoyed it, as that very able and eloquent divine could well afford to do. He one day overheard some persons, whom he passed in the street, say to each other, "Did you see that idiot?" He immediately turned, and said in his drawling and inimitable way. "Ain't you sorry for me?"

## CHAPTER IV.

### ATTEMPTS AT LIFE.

HORACE GREELEY'S stay at Erie was a repetition of his life at former places in all essential points. There was the same diligence and industry in his work, never losing a day ; the same devotion of every spare hour to reading ; the same seeming parsimony ; and the same scanty and anomalous dress, and the same self-sacrificing devotion of his earnings to his parents. "You see, Mr. Sterrett," he said, "my father is on a new place, and I want to help him all I can." He reserved twenty-five dollars for himself for future exigencies out of his seven months' earnings at Erie, having spent only six ; and the whole of the balance went to his father.

A short trial in vain to obtain work on the lowest terms (fifteen dollars a month with board, and even less) convinced him that the West furnished a supply in excess of the demand, for even where there was a vacancy, and he answered an advertisement, he met with the usual rejection. Therefore, upon full consideration, and though he felt himself too

young for such a venture, he decided to turn his steps to what he calls the "Commercial Emporium." So with very "little extra clothing" in his bundle (and, for that matter, very little on his person), or money in his purse, he started out from his father's cabin after a visit which he felt might be the last for a long time.

Was there ever such a pathetic and yet inspiring spectacle, or such a seemingly forlorn hope as that of this simple-hearted, unworldlywise stripling in his strange attire and ungainly movement, tramping toward he knew not what or to what fate,—his sole fortune in his active brain and nimble fingers, and his sole hope in the consciousness of a pure heart and honest aims and the deep-seated belief in a Heavenly Father's love? There is nothing to equal it in the legend of Richard Whittington, for he had no illusion that the streets were paved with gold, and there were no Bow-bells to ring in his discouraged ears, "Turn again, Whittington, Lord Mayor of London!" Fortunately, however, he had something better than a *cat* to found his fortunes on. And Benjamin Franklin, the smug and facile, already old in a varied experience of the world's good and evil, seems vulgar and commonplace beside him, notwithstanding the striking analogies in the careers of the two great represent-

ative printers, journalists, philosophers, and philanthropists of our country.

It was midsummer when he started, and he walked to Buffalo through the woods till he could take the canal-boat thence to Lockport. Thence he walked out to Gaines, along a hot and dusty "ridge road," to visit a friend, drinking water till his mouth and throat seemed "coated with a scale like that often found incrusting a long-used tea-kettle." The next day his friend accompanied him to the canal, where he waited for a boat long after his friend was obliged to leave him. He waited alone in the pitchy darkness till after midnight, and then started down the tow-path to Brockport, some fifteen miles away. Plenty of boats were going the opposite way, and as their head-lights hove in sight he was obliged to "plunge down the often rugged and briery off-bank of the tow-path, to avoid being caught by the tow-line and hauled into the not quite transparent and nowise inviting 'drink.'" "Though the almanac made that night short," he adds, "it seemed to me quite long; and I gladly hailed and boarded at Brockport a line-boat heading eastward;" and turning in, he slept the sleep of the just and the worn-out, attracting the special attention of the passengers—probably in part by his audible enjoyment of repose, for Horace Greeley was always

a prodigious snorer. He reached Schenectady about 6 P.M., and took the turnpike to Albany, the railroad between the two cities not yet being built (there was, in fact, no railroad in the State or in the United States), unless we except the little horse-track laid from the Quincy quarries to convey stones for the Bunker Hill monument, and two or three other tramways of the same kind. It took him twenty-four hours from Albany to reach New York, having missed the day-boat and been obliged to take a tow-boat at a later hour.

It was six o'clock on the morning of August 18th, 1831, that Horace Greeley entered New York at Whitehall, near the Battery. He is graphically described by a writer in *Putnam's Monthly* as "an overgrown, awkward, white-headed, forlorn-looking boy ; a pack suspended on a staff over his right shoulder ; his dress unrivalled in sylvan simplicity since the primitive fig-leaves of Eden ; the expression of his face presenting a strange union of wonder and apathy ; and his whole appearance giving you the impression of a runaway apprentice in desperate search of employment. Ignorant alike of the world and its ways, he seemed to the denizen of the city almost like a wanderer from some other planet. His ungainly motions had something so grotesque in their gracelessness,

that people stopped in the streets to gaze at him." Yet "the face of this uncouth lad" was "lighted up with a peculiar beauty," lines of rare intelligence beneath the listless expression ; a high, smooth forehead, rounded with artistic symmetry ; firm, well-cut lips, combining sweetness and force in harmonious proportions, and revealing the workings of an active and vigorous mind.

His outfit consisted of ten dollars in cash, the clothes in his bundle hardly appraisable in money value, and "a decent knowledge (as he modestly expresses it) of the art of printing, so far as a boy will usually learn it in the office of a country newspaper." He knew no human being within two hundred miles, had no letters of recommendation, and was timid in approaching strangers, as well as without tact or "address" in pushing himself into notice. He was one of those persons who have to be "found out," for he had none of the arts of discovering what was in himself, and was sadly incapable of putting his "best foot foremost."

New York was then a small city, numbering about two hundred and twenty thousand inhabitants, with no railroad connections, no ocean steamships, and with a trade hardly to be called such beside her imperial commerce of to-day. And yet her masses of buildings and furlongs of masts and yards struck his inex-

perienced eyes with a wonder and admiration akin to awe.

The young and unsophisticated adventurer, on landing, walked into and up Broad Street in search of a boarding-house, but was dismayed to find the one at which he first inquired, on the corner of that street and Wall, accessible only at six dollars a week. He did not need, he quaintly says, the landlord's kind suggestion that he would probably prefer one where the charge was more moderate. His next essay was over on the other side of the city, at 168 West Street, where he obtained board at two dollars and a half. The establishment was as much a grog-shop as a boarding-house, kept by a man named McGolrick, who fell a victim to his own bar not long afterward. It was, however, decently and quietly kept, and "mine host" and his family were kind and friendly. He was not yet prepared for the strictly vegetarian quality of his diet on Fridays, nor for the unlimited card-playing of Sunday evenings.

His next step was to start forth, after breakfast the following morning, in quest of employment, having expended half his ten dollars in some new clothes of doubtful improvement. Being totally ignorant of the city, and not realizing that the printing-offices were confined to a limited district, he took many needless steps, traversing entire streets which had not a single



one. His old ill-success had followed him. It seemed almost as if this modern world-mover would never find a fulcrum for his lever, or the tiniest crevice wherein to insert his pick for the making of a niche for himself. He estimates that he must have visited at least two thirds of the printing-offices in New York during that day and the next. The wide difference between perseverance and push was illustrated by the fact that he would simply ask, "Do you want a hand?" and on receiving the uniform answer, "No," would turn silently and go out. At one place he ventured a self-vindication. David Hale, of the *Journal of Commerce*, not only refused him, but charged him rudely with being a runaway apprentice, and told him he had better go home to his master; and cut short his attempt at explanation with the words, "Be off about your business and don't bother us!"

It was another critical moment in his life when, weary and disheartened, and disgusted with New York, he came home to his lodgings on Saturday evening resolved to shake the city's dust from his feet on Monday morning, before his last penny should be gone, and try again the inland towns. But the good hand of Providence was about the lad even in that groggy and un-Sabbath-like habitat, from which he escaped twice that day to attend

church. It so happened that among the young Irishmen who resorted to McGolrick's, and who all took a characteristic interest in the friendless youth, was one who gave him the address of a place where he knew that printers were wanted. This was at John T. West's, over McElrath & Bangs's publishing house, 85 Chatham Street, West being printer for the house. Horace was on the ground as early as half-past five on Monday morning, and sat waiting on the stoop for nearly an hour and a half before the doors were opened. One of the journeyman printers, a Vermonter, arrived a few minutes before the opening, and sitting down beside the rustic youth, entered into conversation with him. He became greatly interested in his fellow-Yankee, and accompanied him to the office, and succeeded in persuading the foreman to give him a trial.

Even then he would not have succeeded if there had not been a job on hand which no other printer in the city would accept. This was to set up what he describes as "a very small (32mo) New Testament in double columns of agate type, each column barely twelve ems wide, with a centre column of notes in pearl only four ems wide; the text thickly studded with references, by Greek and superior letters, to the notes, which of course were preceded and discriminated by corre-

sponding indices, with prefatory and supplementary remarks on each Book, set in pearl and only paid for as agate." The mere description, in these days of weak eyes, makes us fairly shudder at the thought of reading such an ophthalmic book,—how much more to set it in type. Mr. Greeley pronounced this the slowest, and by far the most difficult work he had ever undertaken. With his utmost care his proofs at first "looked as though they had caught the chicken-pox," and required three correctings before stereotyping, so that the whole work required nearly double the time for ordinary composition. He was also sometimes kept waiting for letter. So that "by diligent type-sticking for twelve or fourteen hours per day," he was able for two or three weeks scarcely to make his board, and at his best to earn only five to six dollars a week. He had, however, the advantage of retaining the job to the end.

Then again he was out of work ; and after a short and unpaid job on a short-lived monthly he got back to West's, where he was set at Dr. George Bush's "Notes on Genesis," which had just come in, and which he worked on to the end. This was not quite so bad as the polyglot Testament, but the copy was wretchedly illegible, the page small, and the type close, and the author indulged himself with many

vexatious alterations in the proof. Still he regretted to reach the end of it, as it put him again out of work, and he was so discouraged that he seriously meditated trying some other business. Fortunately for him the extremely hard times prevented his carrying out such a design, and on January 1st he got another job. This was on the *Spirit of the Times*, destined to be a famous sporting paper, started and conducted for years by the noted Colonel William T. Porter, who had been his foreman at West's. Notwithstanding his precarious pay and the devastating cholera season of 1832, Horace clung to this work through the spring and summer. In the autumn he found work for the rest of the year at the stereotyping establishment of J. S. Redfield, afterward a prominent publisher.

He had long since changed his boarding-house to a more reputable and convenient one, at the corner of Chatham and Duane streets, nearly opposite the place where he worked at West's. His spare time, when he could take any, except for meals and sleep, was spent largely in studying the city, its life, its varied occupations, and its people, especially the industrial classes. Once during an unemployed fortnight he attended the sittings of a Tariff Convention at the American Institute in the City Hall Park, where the delegates and de-

baters would have been strangely exercised to be foretold that the odd and simple-looking stripling, who drank in their wisdom with open mouth, would one day be their great leader, champion, and sage. Thirty-four years afterward, on taking the chair as President of the American Institute, he spoke of this convention as one of the influences that had deepened and strengthened the principles of Protection which from early boyhood he had imbibed while sitting at the feet of Henry Clay and other champions of the doctrine.

Among the other disheartening experiences of poor Horace during those dark hours which were just before the dawn were his dismissal from the *Evening Post* on account of its alleged prejudice for having "decent-looking men in the office," and his failure to obtain employment for more than a few days on the *Commercial Advertiser*.

## CHAPTER V.

### INCIPIENT JOURNALISM.

HORACE GREELEY'S 'prentice and journeyman days were now to end. Notwithstanding the hardship and struggle of those years, he was able to say long after: "They say that apprenticeship is distasteful to and out of fashion with the boys of our day; if so, I regret it for their sakes. To the youth who asks, 'How shall I obtain an education?' I would answer, 'Learn a trade of a good master.' I hold firmly that most boys may thus better acquire the knowledge they need than by spending four years in college."

While working on the *Spirit of the Times* Horace tried his hand quite frequently on short articles and paragraphs, as he had done before on the *Northern Spectator*. The foreman of that establishment was Francis V. Story, very nearly his own age, who became a devoted friend. Clubbing their small means (about two hundred dollars), these two young men entered into partnership as printers, getting a job on a *Bank-Note Reporter*, devoted largely to the lottery business. Soon Dr. H. D.

Shepard, through a mutual acquaintance, found them out and proposed to them to become the publishers of the *Morning Post*, his projected cheap paper, of which we have spoken in Chapter I. He was almost a monomaniac on newspapers and periodicals, having already an interest in a medical magazine and a weekly paper. His original capital was fifteen hundred dollars, already nearly exhausted, but he must needs try his new journalistic kite.

It required vigorous scratching for the printer boys to scrape together the funds for the "plant" needed to undertake this job. Finally, George Bruce, who for a generation or more had Mr. Greeley for a profitable customer to the amount of tens of thousands of dollars, was induced to furnish the necessary type on credit; and the first number of the *Morning Post* was issued on January 1st, 1833,—though not at one cent, as Dr. Shepard designed, but at two cents, as Greeley insisted. The office of publication was at the southwest corner of Nassau and Liberty streets, diagonally across from the old South Dutch Church, afterward the Post Office. New Year's Day, and that a stormy one, with a heavy fall of snow upon the ground, was a poor day for bringing out a new paper, especially one which had not been long and loudly heralded. It fell upon the town a dead failure. There was no capital to employ

*The Post*



editors, reporters, and correspondents, or even to pay the printers after the first week. The desperate expedient of reducing the price to one cent did not better matters, and in a little over three weeks the infant pioneer of the cheap daily press died for want of pecuniary breath.

Our young firm of Greeley & Story, however, continued to do a fair and increasing business as printers, "particularly at lottery printing," as their advertisement expressed it. They had Sylvester's *Bank-Note Reporter*, and a tri-weekly sheet called the *Constitutionalist*, the special organ of that business, which was then under State auspices. Horace, though he lived to advocate with zeal the suppression of lotteries, had then no scruples on the subject, and even published an article defending the business from the odium excited by the suicide of a young man who had lost all his property in this form of gambling. He was, moreover, an expert in arranging the tables and schemes in the most attractive forms. Those were the days when churches and benevolent institutions were built by means of lotteries, and men high in the church, like Dudley S. Gregory, of Jersey City, found "millions in it." Mr. Gregory was attracted by these marks of ability and serviceableness on Greeley's part, and threw much business in his way, and he was always afterward a warm and munificent friend.

On July 9th, 1833, Mr. Story was drowned while bathing in the East River, and his place in the partnership was filled by Jonas Winchester. It was a bitter sorrow to Horace Greeley to lose the man whom he called his nearest and dearest friend, and over his coffin he uttered the pathetic words, "Shall I ever meet with any one who will bear with me as you did?" It was not long before the increasing prosperity and accumulating profits of Greeley & Company's business encouraged them in what inaugurated a new step in American journalism,—the publication of a literary weekly, which combined also the quality of a newspaper and a political journal. Winchester was to take charge of the printing and the business management, and Greeley, who had already shed much subordinate and surreptitious ink in editorial paragraphs, was to be at last a real editor. The *New Yorker* was issued, "with no premonitory sound of trumpet," on March 22d, 1834. It was a large, good-looking, well-printed folio sheet (afterward enlarged to a double quarto), at two dollars a year for the former size and three dollars for the latter, increased in the hard times to an additional dollar each. No one can glance over its files even to-day without being struck by its readableness, its life and point and taste, shown alike in editorials, literary criticisms and

selections, its fulness and accuracy of news, and its miscellaneous paragraphs. As respects the selections, Mr. Greeley, as President of the Press Club which gave the great banquet to Mr. Dickens thirty years after, related the interesting fact that he had published in the first number of the *New Yorker* a story—"Mr. Watkins Tottle"—by a then unknown writer who signed himself "Boz." It was far in advance of all preceding periodicals in this country; and, considering the limited facilities of those days, we venture to claim for it a superiority as an "all-round" paper to anything since. Its political department was conducted in a non-partisan spirit, and became the authority of the country on political statistics, as was the *Tribune* afterward.

Of the first number only one hundred were sold, the subscription list including scarcely a dozen. The second number doubled the sale, and the increase was kept up from week to week till the circulation was forty-five hundred at the beginning of volume two, rising steadily to over nine thousand. It was universally well received and noticed by the press of the land, and became exceedingly popular and prized by the people. No one, however, enjoyed it as much as the editor, who revelled in this first experience of untrammelled expression and journalistic creativeness, till the deepening

shadows of financial failure made those years a sustained misery. There never was good business management, nor any continuous and competent publisher for any length of time. It was just in season to be struck by the commercial cyclone of 1837, and as it was sold to subscribers on credit, it became impossible to collect its bills, even in the depreciated currency of the time. There was a weekly loss thenceforward of one hundred to two hundred dollars, not from a lack of subscribers, but of subscription money. It was in vain to appeal, in the most pathetic or imperative terms. Twenty-five hundred names were stricken off the list at a stroke, and every possible retrenchment of expenses made. Every financial expedient consistent with honor was also tried. In fact, it was upon a point of honor that Mr. Greeley felt obliged to keep the paper a-going in that dreadful year, since to stop would have left him in debt to his subscribers, and without the means to pay them, together with his other obligations. "If any one," he says, "would have taken the business and debts off my hands upon my giving my note for two thousand dollars, I would have jumped at the chance, and tried to work out the debt by setting type, if nothing better offered."

No man ever had such a horror of debt.

“To be hungry, ragged, and penniless is not pleasant,” he said, looking back upon this period; “but this is nothing to the horrors of bankruptcy. All the wealth of the Rothschilds would be a poor recompense for a five years’ struggle with the consciousness that you had taken the money or property of trusting friends,—promising to return or pay for it when required,—and had betrayed their confidence.” If others had shared his sensitive integrity, he never would have been obliged after a gallant struggle of seven years to close up the business, scrupulously making good all he owed to subscribers who had paid in advance, and with books showing some ten thousand dollars owed to him by delinquents, men to whose service he had faithfully devoted the best years of his life,—“years,” he frankly and bitterly says, “that though full of labor and frugal care might have been happy had they not been made wretched by those men’s dishonesty. They took my journal, and probably read it; they promised to pay for it, and defaulted; leaving me to pay my paper-maker, type-founder, journeymen, etc., as I could. My only requital was a sorely achieved but wholesome lesson.” He had been burned out in the great Ann Street fire, in August, 1835, and rejoiced to save only his books. But in the complete destruction of February, 1845, it was some

consolation to him that the account-books of the *New Yorker*, which had become a perpetual eyesore, "were at length dissolved in smoke and flame and lost to sight forever."

One thing which added to his embarrassments and anxieties was that, encouraged by the early prospects of his paper, he had married, in July, 1836, and become a family man. The lady of his choice was a Miss Mary Y. Cheney, a "Yankee school-mistress," whose acquaintance he had formed at his New York boarding-house before she went to teach at Warrenton, N. C. She was a lady of great and even brilliant intellectual accomplishments, but unfortunately too much like him in eccentricity and "ideas" to serve as a corrector of his least felicitous peculiarities of life and thought.

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The fact was that the *New Yorker* was too good for its day, being conducted on a literary and moral standard, which prevented it from attracting "the million." Its editorials were sedate and dignified essays upon topics of public interest like the currency, international copyright, usury laws, overtrading, public lands, poor-relief, labor, capital punishment, and foreign relations. It was also singularly modest in its self-assertion and self-advertisement.

The *New Yorker* from the start gave Mr. Greeley a wide and high reputation as a journalist.



One of the first practical outcomes of it was an unexpected visit, in the autumn of 1838, from two gentlemen of Albany, who announced themselves as Mr. Thurlow Weed and Mr. Lewis Benedict. The former was the editor of the Albany *Evening Journal* and the latter was the Chairman of the Whig State Committee. They had been impressed for several months by the extent and accuracy of the political information contained in the *New Yorker*, as well as the interest which that paper imparted to the dryest statistics; and it had occurred to them that he would be just the editor for the campaign paper which the Committee were about to establish for the discussion and enforcement of the burning questions of the hour, such as the Tariff and the United States Bank. It was specially designed to intensify the great Whig revival, which had already swept the State in 1837, in the impending campaign of 1838,—all preliminary to the ousting of Mr. Van Buren and his party from the Federal offices in the great campaign of 1840. Of course the political interests and aspirations of the young and rising William H. Seward lay, in the mind of these men, behind it all. Though professedly neutral as a paper, the leanings of the editor of the *New Yorker* could not be mistaken.

They found Mr. Greeley in his "editorial



attic" working at his printer's case, "a young man with light hair and eyes, and fair but fresh complexion." During the ensuing conversation of about ten minutes he stood leaning on his case, holding the composing-stick in his hand. Having made the proposition, Mr. Weed invited him to dine with Mr. Benedict and himself at the City Hotel, leaving him several hours to think over the proposition. Mr. Greeley was greatly gratified at his selection and at the kind of work before him—for politics was always his passion and delight—and the whole scheme of the paper was arranged before they left the dinner-table that evening. It was, at his suggestion, to be called *The Jeffersonian*, and was to be a small octavo, issued weekly for a year at the nominal price of fifty cents per annum,—the expense to be borne by a syndicate of wealthy or zealous Whigs. The editor's salary he left to be fixed by the Committee for what it should prove to be worth; it was afterward placed at one thousand dollars.

✓ This was a turning-point in Mr. Greeley's career, determining his future as a champion political fighter, and his ultimate association with the firm of Seward, Weed & Greeley. But it was the addition to his already overburdened shoulders of a heavy load. It obliged him to the distracting task of furnishing the

matter for two very different papers, published a hundred and fifty miles apart, and as a consequence to spend half of each week in summer and nearly the whole week in winter at Albany, with the slow methods of intercommunication (especially when the river was frozen up, and no Hudson River Railroad built, so that travel was by stage in winter, occupying nearly three days). The first number of the *Jeffersonian* appeared in about two months (March 3d), and the paper was the best ever published at such a price. Besides intelligent and forcible editorials and a complete and admirable digest of political intelligence, it contained reports of the ablest speeches in Congress and in the Legislature (the latter often made by himself) and a page of general news. The whole tone of the paper was calm, and addressed to the reason, rather than the passions. It carefully avoided personalities and abuse. Its circulation was about fifteen thousand, and it was thought to have contributed largely to the success of the Whigs that fall in New York (who lost such States as Maine, Pennsylvania, and Ohio), and to the election of William H. Seward as Governor over William L. Marcy. One of the most noteworthy events which it reported and commented upon was the tragic duel between Mr. Graves, of Kentucky, and Mr. Cilley, of

Maine, resulting in the death of the latter—the public horror at which event was a chief cause of the suppression of that barbarian practice in the North.

Then followed the famous campaign of 1840, preliminary to which Mr. Greeley, with great pain and depression, was induced by Mr. Weed to relinquish the desire of his heart for the nomination of Henry Clay, and to advocate that of General William Henry Harrison on the score of availability. He threw himself into the canvass with all the *élan* and heat of that marvellous campaign. Greeley was again chosen to publish and edit a campaign paper, though on his own account. In accordance with the spirit and watchwords of the canvass, it was named the *Log-Cabin*. This watchword arose from a scoffing remark of a Democratic journalist, alluding to General Harrison's living for several years after his removal to Ohio in a log-house, then and always a poor man. "Give him a log-cabin and a barrel of hard cider, and he will be content without the Presidency," was the taunt, which the Whigs immediately took up and made the war-cry of the struggle. The whole canvass was a prolonged hurrah, especially by its singing, which rose into a kind of frenzy. Many of these songs were first published in the *Log-Cabin*, the editor himself furnishing two. He thor-

oughly appreciated the "music" as an electioneering element, and writes to Mr. Weed that that gentleman is the only opponent of them. "I am sure," he says, "that nothing takes better or gives a better sale to the paper. Our songs are doing more good than anything else. I know the music is not worth much, but attracts the attention even of those who do not know a note. Really, I think every song is good for five hundred new subscribers." He also, says Mr. Weed, while he did not personally partake of "hard cider" libations, sounded the praises of that popular beverage, and was even heard often melodiously celebrating with his own lips the virtues of "Tippecanoe and Tyler, too." In fact, everything was Tippecanoe, the name being stamped upon innumerable flags, badges, handkerchiefs, and medals, as well as almanacs and song-books; even articles of trade and the toilet were thus christened. Those of our readers who did not pass through that campaign will never know what a carnival and a frenzy an election can be.

The *Log-Cabin* was a weekly of small size, published both at Albany and New York at fifty cents for six months (May 1st to November 1st), or fifteen copies for five dollars. It was the veritable key-note of the campaign, and its success was immediate and immense.

Forty-eight thousand of the first number were sold, the types having to be re-set after they were distributed. The circulation rose as high, in subsequent numbers, as eighty or ninety thousand, and the only limitation seemed to be in the lack of facilities for printing, mailing, and conveyance to the ends of the land. It was a prodigious labor for Mr. Greeley, obliged to publish as well as edit both it and the *New Yorker*, through the timidity and withdrawal of his partners. It included in its contents not only songs, editorials, paragraphs, news, *jeu d'esprits* of every kind, but wood-cuts to accompany the life and battle scenes of General Harrison and the songs, the portraits of the candidates, and often coarse but effective caricatures. Old Tippecanoe was served up in every form of laudation and defence, and "Matty Van" (Buren) on every sort of scathing gridiron.

And yet, notwithstanding the herculean labors of those days (for besides his paper, Mr. Greeley was constantly in demand as a speaker, a committee-man, and general adviser and suggester), and notwithstanding that he made little or no money by it and was heavily in debt for the *New Yorker*, he was in his element and thoroughly enjoyed his work. He gave each subscriber an extra number, containing the results of the election, and after that,

continued the paper for a full year longer, with a circulation of about ten thousand, barely paying the cost of production, counting his work as editor nothing. The number for April 3d, 1841, contained the sad and fateful announcement of President Harrison's death.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE TRIBUNE.

ALL these years of toil and bitter experience had been preparing our hero for the great and culminating work of his life. As he said of himself thirty years after this time, "Half my life has been devoted to the *Tribune*, and the former half to preparation for it." Especially had he been fitted for it by his editorial experiences. The *New Yorker*, the *Jeffersonian*, and the *Log-Cabin* had shown his versatility and capacity for conducting all parts of a family newspaper—the literary, the political, the news, and the miscellaneous departments—with equal and extraordinary ability.

The times, too, were propitious. The great national victory of the Whigs, a few months before, sent the little craft out upon the top wave of both personal and party popularity. The only "live" papers in New York were the *Sun* and *Herald*. The first was not then a strong paper, and the *Herald* was an offence in the nostrils of respectable people for its scurrility and indecency, and there was a wide demand for a journal of ability and purity which at the



same time should be enterprising, and ample in its information. The two papers above mentioned, though nominally neutral, were in unmistakable sympathy with the Democratic Party, and the Whigs felt the need of one which, while independent and unsubsidied, should be in hearty unison with their doctrines and movements, and should be especially adapted to the cause of the laboring class. Mr. Greeley, of all men living, seemed to combine all these qualifications. His capital consisted of his brains, experience, and reputation ; and the only pecuniary assistance received was a loan of one thousand dollars from Mr. Coggeshall, which was duly repaid, principal and interest. Even the friendly offers of Mr. Dudley S. Gregory, who had loaned him one thousand dollars on the *New Yorker*, were declined with thanks. A journalistic critic, none too favorable, says that the *Tribune* sought and succeeded in finding its place between the extremes of dull respectability and bold independency ; of portentous heaviness and unsubstantial froth.

The prospectus of the new paper was issued in the *Log-Cabin* of April 3d, 1841, announcing the appearance on a week from that day of " the first number of a new morning journal of politics, literature, and general intelligence." It would " contain the news by the morning's Southern mail, which is contained in no other

*Tribune* penny paper." It would be published on "a fair royal sheet (size of the *Log-Cabin*)," and served to city subscribers "at the low price of one penny per copy ; mail subscribers, four dollars per annum." As to its objects and spirit, the *Tribune*, as its name imported, would labor to advance the interests of the people, moral, social, and political. It would be free from "the immoral and degrading police reports, advertisements, and other matter, which have been allowed to disgrace the columns of our leading penny papers," and no exertion would be spared to make it both a fit and a welcome "visitant at the family fireside." As to politics, it promised the new Administration "a frank and cordial, but manly and independent support, judging it always by its acts, and commending those only so far as they shall seem calculated to subserve the great end of all government—the welfare of the people." His leading idea (as he says elsewhere) was the establishment of a journal "removed alike from servile partisanship on the one hand and from gagged and mincing neutrality on the other." This advertisement was signed "Horace Greeley, 30 Ann Street."

Alas ! so far as the political pledge and outlook were concerned, the *Tribune* published in its very first number the death of President Harrison, six days before, which soon arrayed

it in the opposition to the recreant Tyler. It was also soon found necessary to raise the price to two cents, or it would have shared the fate of Dr. Shepard's *Morning Post*. Out of the twelve papers then published in New York, six—the *American*, *Journal of Commerce*, *Courier and Enquirer*, *Express*, *Commercial Advertiser*, and *Evening Post*—were published at ten dollars a year. The *Herald* cost two cents. The only successful penny paper was the *Sun*, which owed its success chiefly to its pandering to the lowest tastes of the people in the way of advertisements and news.

The *Tribune* duly appeared on Saturday, April 10th. A fac-simile of the first page lies before me, the title in the same kind of letter as the *Tribune* of to-day. It was appropriately headed with the dying words of President Harrison as a motto: "*I desire you to understand the true principles of the Government. I wish them carried out. . . . I ask nothing more.*" The entire first page looks dry enough, being occupied by the "opinion of Willis Hall, attorney-general, on the legality of the conduct of Robert H. Morris, Recorder of the city of New York." The fledgling journal was one third the size of the present *Tribune*, and began with six hundred subscribers. It was a day of "most unseasonable chill and sleet and snow," and, moreover, of the great

funeral parade and pageant in honor of the dead President, the grand marshal of which died from exposure. Mr. Greeley designates it as a "leaden, funereal morning, the most inhospitable of the year." The edition of five thousand, which was printed, it was found difficult even to give away. The prospect was not a propitious one to Mr. Greeley, who so thoroughly realized that his whole career was dependent on this venture, that he is said to have sat up all the preceding night in a state of nervous anxiety, making frequent changes, and "never leaving the form till he saw it, complete and safe, upon the press." Nor did the prospect improve when, at the end of the first week, he found that his expenses had been five hundred and twenty-five dollars and his receipts ninety-two dollars.

But Horace Greeley was then thirty years old, in the prime of health and vigor, with unequalled qualifications and experience ; with almost exhaustless pluck and "staying power ;" with a national reputation and popularity ; and with such assistants as Henry J. Raymond (afterward the founder of the *Times*), who was one of a thousand ; and George M. Snow as the "Wall Street" editor, a position which he held till 1863. Above all, he was saved by the offer of Thomas McElrath, in about three months, to enter into partnership with a con-

siderable capital, and to take entire charge of its business management,—for which Mr. Greeley was specially unfitted, and which no man could conduct successfully in combination with the editing.

Even more than by anything else was the immediate success of the *Tribune* secured by a conspiracy concocted by the *Sun* to crush it. Herein the one-cent beginning was a fortunate move, since it furnished twice the reading matter and the latest news for the same price as the *Sun*, and consequently drew heavily upon the patrons of that paper, and filled its proprietor with a panic for its very existence. The methods used were as dastardly as they were audacious : an unsuccessful attempt was made to bribe the carriers of the new paper to give up their routes ; the newsmen were threatened with the loss of the *Sun* if they sold the *Tribune*. Even the newsboys of the former were set up to whip those of the latter off the field, whereupon the young men of the office were detailed to protect the boys of the *Tribune*. Even the editor of the *Sun* himself, with a man in his employ, became personally engaged in this noble fray.

Of course the general public could not be content without taking its Briarean part in this scrimmage, which became at once the excitement of the town. Besides being a magnificent

advertisement of the new journal, the popular instinct of fair play, and of sympathy with the "under dog," combined with the real merits of the paper to run up its subscription list at the rate of three hundred a day. By the end of the first week thereafter its paid-up subscribers amounted to two thousand, and by the seventh week the utmost limit of its publisher's capacity was reached—at eleven thousand. At the start it owned type, but no presses, and had to hire the press-work done by the "token." The folding and mailing would have "staggered" Mr. Greeley, had it not been that its earlier subscribers were mostly served by carriers in the city. The income increased more rapidly than the expenses, and its advertisements went up from four to thirteen columns in the one hundredth number, and from four to six cents a line, so that it was almost necessary to cry "hold, enough!"—at least, to beg indulgence for necessary delays till new presses capable of printing thirty-five hundred copies an hour could be procured. In September a weekly edition was issued, into which the *New Yorker* and the *Log-Cabin* were merged, and which became the most widely circulated paper in the United States—running up to hundreds of thousands, and charging from two to five dollars a line for advertisements—carrying the influence of the *Tribune* and its

Weekly  
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editor into the rural districts and into the most remote corners of the land ; and thus educating the yeomanry of the country for that great anti-slavery struggle, which the accession of John Tyler to the Presidency warmed into life, by the incipient movements of his Administration for the acquisition of Texas and other slave territory in the Southwest.

This speedy and enormous progress was aided by occasional feats of triumphant news-gathering and reporting over its rivals ; by its openness to novelties and sensations in the world of thought ; by its superior literary department and selections ; by the great ability of its political discussions and the exactness and fulness of its political intelligence ; and by its system of premiums for new subscribers, from a notable strawberry plant or Mr. Greeley's portrait, to the " American Conflict " for clubs. Special offers were also made for political campaigns, even as low as a dollar a copy for a year to clubs of fifty or more. The second volume increased the price to two cents, or nine cents a week, without losing an appreciable number of its subscribers. At the close of that volume the circulation was twenty thousand, and its advertising business obliged it to issue frequent supplements, and at a later date even to omit advertisements. In 1847 a dispute arose with the *Herald* on the question



of comparative circulation, whereupon the *Tribune* challenged that paper to an investigation, which was accepted. The losing party was to pay two hundred dollars to two orphan asylums. The result showed a difference in favor of the *Herald* of less than seven hundred on its entire circulation of all kinds, including its Presidential *Herald*, of about that number. The *Tribune* had now a semi-weekly edition of nine hundred and sixty. Its editor protested against counting in the Sunday *Herald*, which did not come within the scope of its competition. The public took a great interest in the contest, which was a fine advertisement for both papers, and which was a special benefit to the *Tribune* in the lesson it learned in newspaper book-keeping from the inspection of its rival's books.

Other and more honorable "Battles of the Giants" were waged for the palm of enterprise in getting news, especially election returns, in advance of rivals. Carrier pigeons were trained to fly from Halifax or Boston to Wall Street with the news under their wings. Pony expresses were run, and even locomotives, for which high prices were paid for right of way. A gentleman connected with the *Tribune* tells of the arrival of a heated and dusty messenger, one election-night, from some small but representative place at the end of Long Island at

the rate of sixty-five miles an hour by special engine. "The yell of joy," he says, "which Greeley uttered when he saw the returns might have been heard a quarter of a mile." Not always so honorable was the competition, however, for the same gentleman tells of a *Tribune* messenger who, having gathered up the news in a distant part of the country, ran away with it on an engine which was waiting for the *Herald's* man. This of course was a piece of enterprise by the messenger on his own account. Printers were set to work on the Hudson River boats, who would have an important speech in type on arriving at New York. Such a feat was performed by Henry J. Raymond, in writing out his shorthand notes on the Boston night-boat of one of Daniel Webster's great speeches, and handing them over page by page to a corps of printers, so that by five o'clock in the morning the report, comprising several columns of the *Tribune*, was in type, and in print by six o'clock.

The *Herald* was unquestionably ahead of its rivals on the whole, especially in getting the news from Europe, by means of such expedients as those mentioned above, its own news-boats and expresses from Boston, and with the assistance of the New York pilots. Accordingly the *Tribune*, *Sun*, and *Journal of Commerce* organized a gigantic conspiracy with leading

papers in Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington to overwhelm that naughty and clever paper with defeat. A pilot-boat, the William J. Romer, of about fifty tons, was despatched from New York on February 10th, 1846, and arrived at Cork after a voyage of great peril and discomfort on March 7th. It had been expected that this notedly fast boat would be ready to leave Liverpool on its return trip on February 26th or 27th,—another vessel of the same kind having crossed in eighteen days, including three days' detention by a storm ; so that this part of the plan was a total failure, for the *Cambria* from Liverpool could not now be overtaken. The special object was to get tidings concerning the Oregon boundary question, which was then expected to produce war between this country and England.

Through the ill-concealed confidence and glee of the conspirators, and treachery somewhere, the editor of the *Herald* got wind of the expedition. His successful method of defeating it was to arouse the spirit of Captain Judkins of the steamship *Cambria*, on whose easy-going deliberateness, and that of the Cunard Line, the hopes of the conspirators were now dependent. "Is an express to beat me to Boston?" exclaimed the doughty captain. "I'll see about that!" The result was that

the Cambria made the run to Boston in thirty-six hours after touching at Halifax. A fast steamer owned by Commodore Vanderbilt, who enjoyed the sport in characteristic spirit, was chartered and equipped with two of his best captains, to receive the *Herald* messenger at Allyn's Point, on the Worcester and Norwich Railroad, and convey him across the Sound to Greenport, whence he should proceed by the Long Island Railroad to New York—all railroad travel, of course, being by special locomotive. All went well; the messenger made the trip from Boston in eight and a half hours, beating the combination express five and a half hours. The *Tribune* contended that it was only three hours. When the latter passed the *Herald* office the streets were swarming with newsboys crying its extras. The ill-fated *Romer* was actually beaten by two successive packet ships which had passed her on the way, bearing the usual anticipatory news to the *Herald*, whose editor took pains to send his compliments to Mr. Greeley.

Early in the second year of the *Tribune*, offence was taken by the notorious Mike Walsh, of the "Bloody Sixth" Ward, and his "Spartan Band," resulting in a general riot of the Irish population of that vicinity, by its dispassionate account of their lawlessness and rowdyism on election-day. Persons called on

two successive days, and violently demanded that certain statements should be retracted ; and on no notice being taken of this by the editor, they left behind them a threat to come next day with the whole Sixth Ward, if no retraction was made, and "smash" the office. The only result was a fuller and more severe statement on the third day, and a general preparation to meet the expected mob with musketry from the armed employés, including the editor, who seemed to be quite unconscious of any danger. Hot water from the steam-pipes, and brick-bats from the roof were arranged for. But probably the threatening assailants got word of the preparations, and regarded the storming of a fortress as out of their line ; at any rate, none appeared, and the *Tribune* abated not a jot of its fidelity and plainness of speech, nor the "Bloody Sixth" a tittle of its ruffianism and election irregularities.

Quite a different attempt to smash the *Tribune*, and from a very different quarter, were the great libel suits of the celebrated though irascible J. Fenimore Cooper, whose personal popularity was in an inverse ratio to that of his novels. In those days it had not become a settled thing that the newspaper is a "chartered libertine," and that to expect a verdict against it is to have the daring of a forlorn

hope or of the six hundred who rode into the "jaws of hell" at Balaklava. In 1833, Mr. Cooper, having returned to his paternal acres at Cooperstown after a long residence abroad, in which he had incurred the general detestation of the English press, selected for his entertainment the singular sport of hunting down the Whig papers of this country for their unfriendly criticisms of himself and his books, stimulated as the latter were by his persistent and sarcastic attacks, as far back as 1832, upon the press. The most stinging of these was in "Homeward Bound" and "Home as Found," in which he pictured a typical American editor in "Steadfast Dodge" of the *Active Inquirer*, combining every baser quality of human nature: he was "a sneak, a spy, a coward, a demagogue, a parasite, a lickspittle, a fawner upon all from whom he hoped help, a slanderer of all who did not care to endure his society." A specimen of the "tit for tat" with which this sort of thing was returned was published in the *New Yorker* of December 1st, 1838, probably by Park Benjamin: "He is as proud of blackguarding as a fish-woman of Billingsgate. It is as natural to him as snarling to a tom-cat, or growling to a bull-dog. He is the common mark of scorn and contempt of every well-informed American—the superlative dolt!" His first suit was against the

local paper, followed by suits against the New York *Courier and Enquirer*, *Commercial Advertiser*, Albany *Evening Journal*, and other leading papers, who took up the cudgels for their contemporary.

The turn of the *Tribune* came upon its publication, on November 17th, 1841, of a letter from Mr. Thurlow Weed, of the *Evening Journal*, describing a case in which he had recently been worsted. The trial was held at Ballston, near Saratoga, on the succeeding 9th of December. A peculiarity of these cases was that Mr. Cooper, aided by his son, appeared as his own counsel, and that Mr. Greeley also conducted his own defence. Previous and later trials brought in many of the leading lawyers of the State, such as Joshua A. Spencer, Ambrose L. Jordan, Daniel Cady, and William H. Seward. No witnesses were called, the publication being admitted and the editor's responsibility accepted. The presiding Judge Willard, after speeches by the defendant and the Messrs. Cooper, delivered what Mr. Greeley called a "bullying" charge against him. The result was a verdict against him of two hundred dollars with costs. On his return to New York he had his satisfaction in a report of eleven columns for the *Tribune* of the next day, embodying the main points of his forcible and eloquent speech of fifty minutes in length.



"This was intended," he says, "to be good-natured, perhaps even humorous, and some thought I succeeded; but Fenimore seems not to have concurred in that opinion, for he sued me upon the report as a new libel—or, rather, as several libels." Mr. Greeley, though his firm belief was that he could have done better in the long run by "simply attending in person and briefly stating the material facts to the jury," had not the time to be his own lawyer in this second protracted struggle, and employed Messrs. Seward and A. B. Conger, who succeeded in postponing the case till Mr. Cooper's death, so that it never came to trial. It did not stop Mr. Greeley's freedom of editorial comment on "our friend Fenimore."

Mr. Greeley, however, learned the lesson of keeping clear of becoming plaintiff in libel suits. Having been "outrageously libelled," as he thought, by a charge of having been bought up by some railroad company in the West, he impulsively ordered suits to be commenced; but upon reflection he decided that he could neither afford to lose, nor to win them, and gladly accepted such retractions as his libellers saw fit to make. "Henceforth," he says, "that man must very badly want to be sued who provokes *me* to sue him for libel." At the same time (1868), he says, "I can hardly remember a time when I was absolutely exempt

from these infestations," as defendant. He attributes it to the fact of its being "a main reliance of certain attorneys, destitute alike of character and law," and, in this State, to the "perversion of the law by our judges of thirty or forty years ago."

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE TRIBUNE (*continued*).

THE *Tribune* suffered not a little, also, in the way of internecine war on the part of the press itself, and in personal attacks upon its editor for his opinions and his peculiarities. But it was always equal to the situation, whether the assault came from clergymen, like Drs. Potts and Hawks, or from editors, like Colonel Webb, Major Noah, James Brooks, Henry J. Raymond, and Bennett, or the Sunday *Mercury* and the *Plebeian*, and the whole raft of the Democratic press. Horace Greeley seemed never more in his element than when, with his back to the wall, he called on the various Macduffs about him to "come on." It must be confessed that he handled them not only "without gloves," but without fastidiousness as to the sharpness of his thrusts or the choice of language. If he called Raymond "the little villain," he impartially called Major Noah an "old villain." Thomas H. Benton also is "an unqualified villain,"—the epithet was rather a favorite one in repelling personal charges ;

also the countercharge of "deliberate," or "base," or "stupendous," or "paltry falsehood."

The *Courier and Enquirer*, under Colonel Webb and Raymond, was Mr. Greeley's and the *Tribune's* special and incessant belligerent. Webb attacked the editor of the *Tribune* on January 27th, 1844, as an Abolitionist, a "philosopher," and a Grahamite, who would have all the world live upon bran bread and sawdust, an advocate of Fourierism and other "tomfooleries" resulting in the vice and immoralities of Fanny Wright, etc.; at the same time claiming himself to be "a Christian," and a contrast to all the sins and weaknesses of Greeley. He also accused him of seeking notoriety by his eccentricities and strange theories, hoping to be accounted great "by wandering through the streets with a hat double the size of his head, a coat after the fashion of Jacob's of old, with one leg of his pantaloons inside and the other outside of his boot, and with boots all bespattered with mud, or possibly a shoe on one foot and a boot on the other, and glorying in an unwashed and unshaven person." The article wound up with these words: "In short, there is not the slightest resemblance between the editor of the *Tribune* and ourself politically, morally, or socially; and it is only when his affectation and

impudence are unbearable, that we condescend to notice him or his press."

Horace Greeley, in his equally characteristic rejoinder next day, admitted his "vegetarian" diet "mainly but not exclusively;" but it was his own private affair, about which he did not trouble his readers,—“why should it concern the colonel?” He deprecated that so humble a person as himself should be made to exemplify philosophy, and still more that “Christianity is personified by the hero of the Sunday duel with the Hon. Tom Marshall.” As regarded his personal appearance, he retorted with much heat upon the “exaggerated foolery” which had been passed along by malicious blockheads of the press from a lack of ideas, till, “from its origin in the Albany *Microscope*, it has sunk down at last to the columns of the *Courier and Enquirer*.” Yet all this time he had worn better clothes than two thirds of his assailants, and better than any of them could honestly wear if they paid their debts (Webb was a good deal of a Beau Brummel and a Turveydrop); “while, if they are, indeed, more cleanly than he, they must bathe very thoroughly not less than twice each day. . . . That he ever affected eccentricity is most untrue; and certainly no costume he ever appeared in would create such a sensation in Broadway as that which James Watson Webb

would have worn, but for the clemency of Governor Seward"—alluding to his sentence to imprisonment on account of the before-mentioned duel. The gallant colonel dropped the subject, and retired from the field with rumpled crest.

At another time, however, the *Courier and Enquirer* tried to excite the mob against the *Tribune* and its editor for its opposition to the Mexican War. Mr. Greeley's reply pronounces it "no new trick" on the part of that paper, and quotes its incendiary language at the time of the great "Abolition riots" of 1834, when a lawless and furious mob held possession of the city, assaulting churches, houses, and persons; language which distinctly places the "Abolitionists and Amalgamationists" "beyond the pale of the law," and calls upon the city authorities to "withdraw the ægis of the law" from them, and to make them understand "that they prosecute their treasonable and beastly plans at *their own peril*." Mr. Greeley goes on to say: "Such is the man, such the *means* by which he seeks to bully freemen out of the rights of Free Speech and Free Thought. There are those who cower before his threats and his ruffian appeals to mob violence,—here is one who never will. . . . Let those who threaten us with assassination understand, once for all, that we pity while we despise their baseness." It will

be seen from these courtesies between the two most high-toned morning papers in New York, that, with all its specks and spots of to-day, the journalistic world "does move" in some things toward a greater "sweetness," if not "light."

Another controversy, sufficiently intense yet well bred, and exhibiting a high order of dialectic ability, was the public discussion in 1846 between Greeley of the *Tribune* and Raymond of the *Courier and Enquirer*, upon Fourierism, the former being the challenger. This lasted six months, comprising twelve articles on each side, attracting great attention, and afterward published in pamphlet form. We may have occasion to refer to this discussion elsewhere. Suffice it now to say that Mr. Greeley did not come off second-best in the vigor and vivacity of his style; but Mr. Raymond's inexorable appeals from theory to practice, his skill in concentrating his attack upon the weak places in his opponent's armor, and in taking advantage of his admissions and reservations, left no question where the "prize for debate" should be awarded. One thing is certain: Mr. Greeley was obliged, toward the close, to disavow for the *Tribune* any responsibility for Fourier, Parke Godwin, or Communistic immorality, and to state its position mildly thus: "What the *Tribune* advocates is, simply and solely,



such an organization of society as will secure to every man the opportunity of uninterrupted and profitable labor, and to every child nourishment and culture." Moreover, the subject thenceforth was rarely broached in the *Tribune*, and then only in self-defence from personalities. The discussion undoubtedly did good in awakening the public mind to the evils of society, and to those many practical applications of the principle of association which are already among the great and beneficent features of our new civilization.

One of these applications was tried in the *Tribune* office itself in 1846,—the origination of what is now probably the method of managing all our large papers. The plan was to make the paper, then estimated as worth one hundred thousand dollars, with a yearly profit of thirty thousand dollars, a joint-stock concern, divided into one hundred shares of one thousand dollars each. Greeley and McElrath retained a majority of the stock, while a few shares were owned by the principal employés—its assistant editors (including at that time Dana, Snow, Ripley, and others), and such other assistants as the cashier and the foremen of the press and composition rooms. The stock immensely increased in value, and changed hands, till, in a little over twenty years, it was estimated at one million dollars, and its shares were worth even as high

as ten thousand dollars; one third of the shareholders were outsiders, like Dr. J. C. Ayer, of Lowell. It will be seen that the strictly associational part of the scheme, which was Mr. Greeley's sole motive in undertaking it, was a failure by permitting the transfer of membership and the division of profits to those not connected with the actual producing of the *Tribune*. Still, as each share was entitled to one vote, the control continued in the hands of the employés, and therefore of the editor and the publisher, Greeley and McElrath. The system could not have failed to elevate and stimulate all departments of the work. Perhaps it would have worked still better if, in some way, the far greater number of subordinates had been made sharers in the profits.

One of Mr. Greeley's enterprises was the annual issue of an almanac, specially devoted to political statistics, and famously authoritative. It was begun with the *Tribune* in 1841, but did not receive the name of that paper till 1856, having previously been called *The Whig Almanac*. Many features of value and interest were added to it from time to time, so that it became, in its way, "as much of an institution as the *Tribune* itself." Herein, as an almanac-maker, we find another point of analogy between Horace Greeley and his great-forerunner, Benjamin Franklin.

almanac  
The Whig  
Almanac

Another stroke of enterprise, wherein the *Tribune* added a new word to the literature of journalism, was not as successful. The troublous times of 1848 throughout all Europe gave busy employment to the papers, and stirred up a special rivalry in giving the latest and the fullest news of the fall of dynasties, the rise of peoples, and the battles and riots which were of almost daily occurrence. Ireland, of course, had to have its hand in such a political and continental "Ballygasther Fair." As Mr. Greeley, always a sympathizer with that oppressed country, was a leader in the "Directory of the Friends of Ireland," all looked for the earliest information in its columns. Accordingly, when a great victory at Slievenamon was announced to have occurred about August 1st, it obtained general credence. Especially so, when such particulars were given as that the commander of the British forces had been killed, and six thousand troops killed and wounded; that the road for three miles was covered with the dead; that Kilkenny and Limerick had been taken by the people, and the people of Dublin had gone out by thousands to assist; that John B. Dillon was wounded in both legs, and Thomas F. Meagher in both arms; that it was expected that Dublin would rise and attack the jails on the succeeding Sunday night; and that the non-appearance

of this intelligence in any Dublin paper of a true account of the battle was due to intimidation by the authorities. But the story turned out to be a fabrication "out of whole cloth;" there was no such battle, and consequently no such results. Whether Mr. Greeley himself would have published the hoax, if he had not been in the far West, we cannot tell. Suffice it to say that the *faux pas* is to this day associated with his editorial memory under the name, given it by Bennett, of "Slievegammon," as the type of a journalistic ambition which "o'erleaps itself and falls on t'other side."

A genuine as well as a magnificent triumph was, however, scored by the *Tribune*, in which it quite eclipsed the *Herald*, in its reports of the Franco-German War, especially in its descriptions of the battles of Gravelotte and Sedan.

Thus the *Tribune* continued to flourish, and was able to begin its fourth volume with an enlargement of one third, and with new type. As the editor expressed it in his announcement, this increase and prosperity were in spite of the fact, which he well knew, that many of his views were unacceptable to a large proportion of his readers,—referring especially to his socialism, advocacy of Irish rights, and opposition to capital punishment. So far as the Whig Party was concerned, he acknowledged his obligations, at the same time reasserting

his paper to be "not an organ, but a humble advocate."

On February 5th, 1845, at four o'clock in the morning, the *Tribune* building was burned down, several of the employés barely escaping with their lives, and nothing saved but a few books, not even the forms on which the pressmen were working, or a scrap of the editor's papers, correspondence, and manuscripts,—with the important exception of the mail books, which were preserved in the "salamander safe." A little over half the loss was covered by insurance. The cause of the completeness of the destruction was the fact that a strong gale was blowing, the streets were impassable by a snow-storm of twenty-four hours' continuance, and the hydrants frozen up. But a temporary office was immediately hired, its friends and its rivals united in supplying materials, and the *Tribune* appeared the next morning as usual. In three months a far more suitable building had arisen on the ruins of the old, and in the end the seeming set-back had proved a step in advance. Mr. Greeley wrote a highly characteristic editorial in that next day's paper, in which he humorously and pathetically deplored his individual losses—"even the old desk at which we sat, the ponderous inkstand, the familiar faces of files of correspondence, the choice collection of pamphlets, the unfinished

essay, the charts by which we steered,"—yes, and "those boots, and *Webster's Dictionary*."

In his agreeable volume, Mr. Parton gives us an interior view of the *Tribune* building about 1854, familiar to him as an employé. At this time Charles A. Dana was the managing editor, and his associates such well-known men as William S. Fry, George Ripley, James S. Pike, George M. Snow, Bayard Taylor, F. J. Ottarson, Solon Robinson, and three others. Each of these presided over a department, such as City Editor, Marine, Financial, Literary, Agricultural, Political, News Editor, Foreign and Domestic, etc., each with a more or less numerous staff. Thus the City Editor had fourteen assistants, the Marine had twelve; the telegraphic bureau had a general agent, with two subordinates (at Liverpool and Halifax), and fifty reporters in various parts of the country. There were eighteen foreign and twenty home, regular and paid, correspondents. A similar army was found connected with the publishing department. The whole number employed on the paper was about two hundred and twenty, about one hundred and thirty giving it their whole time.

The hour is ten o'clock A.M. We are taken into the editorial rooms,—first, into a long, narrow apartment, with desks for the principal edi-



tors along the sides, a file of the *Tribune*, shelves of books and manuscripts, and a great heap of exchanges on the floor. The desks are piled with letters and papers, or new publications. In an inner room is the chief editor's *sanctum*, with a green carpet, two desks, a sofa, another file of the *Tribune*, a large case full of reference books, and a bust of Henry Clay. Mr. Greeley's desk looks out upon the Park, the City Hall, and the crowds of passers near and far.

One by one the editors arrive, and are graphically photographed by Mr. Parton in their turn; and at last, between twelve and one o'clock, Mr. Greeley comes in, with his pockets full of papers and a bundle under his arm. His first act is to despatch his special *aide-de-sanctum* on various errands. Then perhaps he will comment on the morning's paper, dwelling with pertinacious emphasis on its defects. In the *sanctum* he finds a heap of letters, clippings, and newspapers, which he opens while several visitors state their errands—usually some assistance or axe to be ground, a lecture invitation, or an admirer who wants to shake his hand. Thus the time passes till three or four o'clock, and then Mr. Greeley is ready to go to dinner. For many years his dining-place was one of the best though least obtrusive places in the city,—Windust's, a few doors from the *Tribune* office, whose sign, "*Nun-*



*quam non paratus,*" will doubtless be recalled to many of our readers' minds.

The scene then changes to the editorial rooms at nine o'clock and after in the evening : " Seven desks are occupied with silent writers, most of them in the *Tribune* uniform—shirt-sleeves and mustache. . . . The editor-in-chief is at his desk, writing in a singular attitude, the desk on a level with his nose, and the writer sitting bolt upright. He writes rapidly, with scarcely a pause for thought, and not once in a page makes an erasure. The foolscap leaves fly from under his pen at the rate of one in fifteen minutes. He does most of the *thinking* before he begins to write, and produces matter about as fast as a swift copyist can copy. Yet he leaves nothing for the compositor to guess at, and if he makes an alteration in the proof he is careful to do it in such a way that the printer loses no time in 'overrunning'—that is, he inserts as many words as he erases. Not unfrequently he bounds up into the composing-room, and makes a correction or adds a sentence with his own hand. He is not patient under the infliction of an error. He expects men to understand his wishes by intuition ; and when they do not, but interpret his half-expressed orders in a way exactly contrary to his intention, a scene is likely to occur."

When the *Tribune* had completed its thirtieth year, April 10th, 1871, Mr. Greeley, only a year and a half before his death, was able to report that the small folio sheet, employing perhaps twenty persons, was now one of the largest journals in the world, containing ten to fifteen times as much, and employing from four to five hundred persons. Its daily contents, apart from advertisements, would make a fair 12mo volume, such as sold in the book-stores for one dollar and a quarter to one dollar and a half ; and, when compelled to issue a supplement, its reading contents equalled an average octavo. The total cost of production had grown from five hundred and twenty-five dollars to twenty thousand dollars a week. It had always managed to pay its own way in the hardest times ; and while " rendering an earnest and zealous, though by no means indiscriminate, support to the Whig and afterward to the Republican Party, the *Tribune* had asked no favor of either, and no odds of any man but that he should pay for what he ordered."

The latter sentence sketches, perhaps, the most essential quality of the *Tribune* through its entire existence under Horace Greeley. It was emphatically an independent journal of the highest kind, as distinguished from the vain or emasculated attempt to produce a neutral one. It was such from its very inception—independ-

dent of the subsidies either of money or of office. In the above-mentioned anniversary remarks he says : " Holding that a journal can help no party while it requires to be helped itself, we hope so to deserve and retain the good-will of the general public that we may be as independent in the future, as we have been in the past." It was established and conducted not for money-making, or popularity. It was in dead earnest to be indeed a " Tribune of the People" in the defence and promulgation of what it esteemed their rights. It represented that genuine democracy which is too true to the people to court their support by the least demagogism or the withholding of the plainest words. It shared the fate of all such faithful and unselfish friends, in not being understood or received by its own, and it seems almost a miracle that its vigorous opposition to the most popular currents of the day, and its unhesitating championship or hospitality toward new and unpopular ideas, did not wreck it. " In a word," says one of its friends, " if the course of the *Tribune* had been suggested by a desire to give the greatest offence to the greatest number, it could hardly have made more enemies than it did." Its tone of independence is well expressed by its editor, who, after explaining its idea of a true conservatism as opposed to a " Chinese tenacity," and the es-

sential sameness of "the humble servitor and bepraiser of the dear people" with "the supple courtier and wholesale flatterer of the despot," says calmly : "Those, whose dislike to or distrust of 'the course of the *Tribune*' impel them to reject our paper, have ample range for a selection of journals more acceptable."

At the same time, it must be admitted that this very quality of earnestness and independence is calculated, in a country like ours, to commend it to a large constituency who either agree in sentiment or at least in spirit. Down-right and transparent sincerity have a great charm for multitudes of minds, and in a rapidly growing ratio. Moreover, the *Tribune* represented a large majority of the reading public of America in its advocacy of the protective system, and was on the crest of the floodtide of the great anti-slavery sentiment. The fervent championship of great ideas gave tone and temper to its steel, and its editorial blade was not only sharp and cutting, but struck out continual sparks. One may soon grow tired of mere smartness or entertainment, but not of the blood-earnestness and incisive swordsmanship of the true fighter,—especially if he be the knightly champion of the wronged and weak.

Another point in favor of the *Tribune*, and a secret of its success, was mentioned in Parliament by the late John Bright. After speaking

in praise of its general excellence and ability, "venturing to say that there was not a better paper than this in London," he pronounced as one of its chief merits that "he found not in it a syllable that he might not put on his table and allow his wife and daughter to read with satisfaction." It is to be regretted that our best papers, and even the *Tribune* at times, have not always upheld this high standard.

A comprehensive estimate of the *Tribune's* place in journalism is given in Mr. George Ripley's address at the laying of the cornerstone of the third (and present) building, after the second one had been burned down in 1873. The foundation was originally laid in ideas and sentiments. Horace Greeley was a man of profound convictions and emotional tenderness, as well as of lofty aspirations. His paper was consecrated to the promulgation of truth. It represented the scientific movement which began with the deaths of Hegel and Goethe, two or three years before the *Tribune* was founded, and, at the same time, the new reaction which was setting in, that refused to regard the results of physical research as the limit of rational belief. Thus it had throughout represented the intellectual spirit of the age ; it had welcomed every new discovery of truth ; and, free from the limitations of party in politics, science, philosophy, or religion, it

had watched with its hundred eyes, alike the events of the passing time and the harbingers of a brighter day.

We need only add that till his death the *Tribune* and Horace Greeley were one and inseparable ; the paper was the mirror, the embodiment of and the clew to the man. It was also his idol, every line of it as precious as is his growing marble in the sculptor's eye. He read it carefully, says one of his co-laborers, column by column and article by article, every day from its first number until the week of his death ; if he missed any numbers in his travels he was sure to hunt them up on his return ; and he so absorbed their contents that he remembered years after where to find anything that had attracted his attention.

Other matters relating to the *Tribune* will be found under various heads, such as "The Editor," "The Social Reformer," "The Politician," "The Civil War," and "Friends and Co-laborers," to which we refer our readers. It is impossible, as we have said, to make any clean distinction between the man and the many currents which he made for his energies, or colored with his vitality.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE EDITOR.

WHETHER there be such a thing as a "born editor" or not, it is certain that Horace Greeley took to this business as early and as easily as a duckling does to its "native element." As he eagerly seized and read the local paper of his boyhood, there seems to have come over him somewhat of Correggio's feeling when he saw Raphael's picture, "I, too, am a painter!" for even at that early day he declared his determination to be a printer, evidently regarding the latter as the man who made the paper in its entirety, or, at least, the printer's case as the trap-door to the editor's office. We have shown, too, how he took every opportunity in his apprentice days to make editorial contributions, in the way of news items and brief comments. It does not appear that he ever had any other occupation in view, even when chopping wood and ploughing the rocky soil of the White and Green Mountain States. The failure of his father at first to negotiate satisfactorily with the publisher of the *Poultney Spectator*, and the words, "Come, my boy, let



us go home," were like the closing of the gate of Paradise in the Peri's face.

He was essentially, if not exclusively, a publicist. Private and personal matters had no interest for him, as compared with public affairs, the politics of his country, the great movements of the nations, and the questions of reform which related to social progress. He wanted to be and rejoiced in being an editor, that he might bring to bear a great engine of information and propulsion upon these world-wide and human interests. In this endeavor, it has been well said, "he put away from him all thirst for renown, all appetite for wealth, all desire for personal advantage. He never counted the cost of his words; he never inquired what course would pay, or what would please his subscribers. He held in magnificent disdain the meaner sort of editor . . . who strives only to print what will sell," and held him "as bad as the parson who preaches only to fill the pews."

He was the editor in all he did,—that is, the diffuser of intelligence and educator of the people. A correspondent who represented himself as having gained a fortune and having no children to provide for, once asked for advice as to the best use to make of his money. Mr. Greeley's first suggestion was to establish in New York "a Universal Free Intelligence

Office," as a vast medium of communication between labor and employment. His lectures and books are simply enlarged and elaborated, or collated, editorials on the only class of topics on which he cared to write,—never for entertainment, but always to make men think or arouse them to practical action. He was, what he called his paper, the "Tribune of the People." He lost much time by his accessibility to their visits in office-hours, and much of his overwork came from replying to their countless inquiries with his own hand. (He never could, or would, write by dictation.) He cared nothing for "the guinea stamp," and valued men as the factors of a great humanity. That this humanity might be free, might be intellectually and morally educated, and might be led to higher reaches in social organization, was the end always in view. He was a "fighting editor," because he had espoused the cause of mankind. He was a true knight-errant, because his lance was always at the service of the weak, the down-trodden, the wronged. We may anticipate our final summing up of his career and character by pointing to this unquestioned and unique position which he holds among the great and successful editors of the world, as a more lofty and majestic pedestal than any other secular place among world-movers and "worthies."

We emphasize the word *editor*, for Horace

Greeley was pitiably unsuccessful till he could gather the reins in his own hands. His intensity and singleness of aim, as well as his imperiousness of disposition, unfitted him to be a subordinate. He stepped into his office like an admiral on the deck of his flag-ship. He watched every spar and rope and speck upon the planks with a lynx eye, and his whole comfort for the day was wrecked if his inspection was not perfectly satisfied. His letters written to Mr. Dana, his managing editor, during the time he himself was in Washington, watching the fateful political struggles of 1855-56 over the election of Banks to the Speakership, and the Kansas-Nebraska Question, as *Tribune* correspondent, strikingly illustrate his extreme sensitiveness to the omissions, or what he considered the "stupid" or disobedient commissions of his subordinates. "Friend Dana" must have found life a "torture," if not a "heart-break," to him from these constant broadsides, quite as much as he who fired them with the subscription, "Yours sadly" or "Yours soreheadedly." His realization of the fact that he was no more to be the autocrat of the *Tribune* on his resumption of the editorship after the Presidential election of 1872, should not be overlooked among the causes under which this overworked and disappointed man sank so suddenly into his grave.

He was a fearfully overtasked man, without realizing it, alike from his splendid constitution and temperate habits, and from his delight in work for its own sake ; as Mr. Ripley says, " In respect to work he was positively fanatical." He was never idle, and he did not know how to rest or take recreation ; his idea of a vacation was to go on a lecturing tour. His average day's work is stated to have been from two to three columns of the *Tribune*, besides a dozen letters, and a large amount of other work which devolves upon an editor. In the Presidential campaign of 1844, he averaged four columns a day and answered twenty letters, besides travelling all over the country, addressing meetings almost every day, and being in constant conference with local politicians. The result of this tremendous exertion was to so deplete his system that he broke out into boils on his right arm, at the rate of twenty at one time between his wrist and elbow. When in the city he worked sixteen hours, and so late that he had to walk the long distance home on foot. He was known to have remained in his office chair without ceasing from eleven in the morning till nearly midnight. His books, addresses, and periodical articles were crowded into his editorial work. It is no exaggeration to say that " probably no other person of his age in the Union accomplished as much work

as he did on an average." And yet he had his premonitions and hints of his physical limitations, for we find him signing a letter to Thurlow Weed, in 1837, written at "half-past twelve o'clock" at night, "*yours tired, sleepy, and with a headache.*"

Mr. Greeley's special *forte*, though he kept such a close watch on all departments of his journal and was apt to have his finger in every section of the pie, was undoubtedly in the writing of editorials and in the vigor and vigilance of its political department, especially in the fulness and accuracy of its political intelligence. Dr. Leonard Bacon used to say of a Connecticut minister, famous for his relish and capacity for ecclesiastical "minutes" and figures, "I do believe that man has a statistical devil!" Mr. Greeley's political statistics were such a boon and reliance to all who were interested in elections that he would be a sorry ingrate who should say, "He hath a devil." He himself had little need of almanacs or printed records; even as far back as his Poultney days he was the referee and oracle on all such points. "His memory," says Mr. Ripley, "was as retentive as Pascal's. His mind was a marvellous storehouse of facts, dates, and events. He seemed to forget nothing worth remembering. He was a political cyclopædia of the best revised edition. He was every hour of the day what

the *Tribune Almanac* was at the close of December."

How far his politics and "notions" affected the "success" of his great journal, it were hard to say; they may have helped as much as they retarded it. One critic says, "Mr. Greeley would be the greatest journalist of the world if he did not aim to be one of the leading politicians in America." Another says, "If Mr. Greeley would devote himself to the *Tribune* alone, and ignore politics and farming, he would be one of the greatest journalists." And it has been one of the commonest remarks that the freedom of discussion on new and unpopular reforms was a great drawback to the *Tribune* in its early days. But novelty, when well managed, has the effect of a continuous sensation, and "live issues" make a living and magnetic paper. Horace Greeley had a genuine editorial instinct,—that is to say, the ability of projecting himself into the minds of his readers and instinctively to judge what would interest them. The greater part of the budget of letters to his managing editor, recently published in the *Sun*, is taken up with pointing out and protesting against mistakes in this respect. And yet it is this very managing editor, who, among Mr. Greeley's "remarkable qualifications for the profession," enumerates "a quick perception of the signifi-



cance of events, an accurate judgment of the mutual relations of occurrences, a ready appreciation of the drift of popular currents, and a sympathetic comprehension of the public temper of the hour." His literary judgment, also, was excellent in the selections which he made, especially in the *New Yorker*, and in his apparently unvaried and unqualified approval of Mr. Ripley's management of the literary department of the *Tribune*. However conscious of his own disqualifications or limitations in many of the departments, he had the instinct to bring about him the most brilliant galaxy of journalists we have had in New York,—many of whom he himself had discovered and developed. Concerning some of these and their relations with Mr. Greeley, we shall have occasion to speak again.

His own style was distinguished by its simplicity and conciseness, and by the purity of his English, so that he has been called the American Cobbett. But what is most characteristic is its directness, its unhalting and unswerving progress from the first sentence to the equally abrupt yet complete close. If not "half-battles," like Luther's, they were successive cannonades, which came with cumulative force. He thoroughly appreciated the power of varied repetition upon public opinion. Although he always meant to do away with



titles to editorials, and never did, he had a positive genius for headings, at once awakening attention and yet not unduly anticipating the subjoined article. And yet his style was a tidal one, rising at times into flaming language, into outbursts of denunciation, into flashes of wit and irony, and again disclosing an unexpected tenderness and sentiment. It was never commonplace nor devoid of homely and ingenious illustration. He was sometimes extravagant and even vituperative in his expressions, though remarkably self-restrained and conservative in comparison with his letters or his conversation. He was as fair as he was forceful in argument, being careful (a rare thing in those days) to quote, as far as possible, the exact language of his opponent.

The whole truth, however, will not allow us to pass by the less amiable traits of Mr. Greeley's editorial character. Whether entirely from natural temperament, or from a life-long overstrain of his nervous system, he was the creature of his own moods, and was constantly driven by them into personalities and abuse. He was no respecter of persons in this regard, and would apply to men like William C. Bryant and John Bigelow his favorite language, "You lie, you villain, you know you lie," as readily as to the lowest member of the Sunday press. In reply to Major M. M. Noah's charge

that Greeley had breakfasted with two colored men at a boarding-house, he did not content himself with a denial of the fact, and an assertion that he should not regard it as a thing to be ashamed of if he had, but he took occasion to remind his opponent that for eighteen centuries his kindred had been "accursed of God, outlawed and outcast, and unfit to be the associates of Christians, Mussulmans, or even self-respecting heathen;" and that "where there are thousands who would not eat with a negro, there are (or lately were) tens of thousands who would not eat with a Jew." He himself disclaimed any such prejudice, and asserted that he treated all men according to what they were and not whence they sprang. He left to such "renegades" as Noah the stirring up of prejudices. "That he is a knave, we think much to his discredit; that he is a Jew, nothing, however unfortunate it may be for that luckless people." The worst thing about this kind of writing was his inconsistency, by which he would pass over in silence or treat with patience the serious attacks from respectable sources, concerning, perhaps, the most important principles of his belief and policy, and then reply in a fury of personalities to the most trifling hit of a paper which should have been beneath his notice. It was simply the outburst of ill-temper.

It was this same constitutional sensitiveness,

which made him a hard master. He did not mean to be unkind to his assistants, but the evidence is too general to shut our eyes to the fact that, while he gave them credit for work which satisfied him, he was extremely impatient with their mistakes, and even with their imperfectness according to his standards. It seemed impossible for him to understand that others should not take the same interest in certain subjects as he, or that they should not have all data and figures connected therewith at their fingers' ends, like himself. A very slight omission of news led to the absurd exclamation: "You crucify me, yes, you will crucify me with such management!" At another time he wrote to his managing editor from Washington: "For God's sake speak the truth to me. . . . I must give it up and go home. You are getting everybody to curse me. I am too sick to be out of bed, too crazy to sleep, and am surrounded by horrors. I can just bear the responsibilities that belong to me, but you heap a load on me that will kill me." In succeeding letters he says humbly: "You must not get cross with me. You see, it seems hard to stay in this dreary, infernal hole to write letters, which mere delay makes a great deal more stupid even than they naturally are;" and again: "Let me thank you for your glorious issue of yesterday, including supplement."

It was a frequent custom, when answering attacks, to write over his own initials, though there appeared no good reason for it. It was doubtless one of the effects of that personal journalism which was at its height in his day, but has passed away with him who was its most striking exemplar.

Every one has heard of Horace Greeley's extraordinary handwriting, which required special and expert printers to set it up. It gives the impression not of carelessness, but of a want of control over the muscles of his hand. Some words are like the painfully and imperfectly formed work of aged or partially paralyzed or cramped fingers. There is a lack of consistency throughout, some words being quite distinct, and others illegible, without form, and void. The letter *a*, as distinct from *o*, is a non-existence; *b* and *p* and *h* are apt to be indistinguishable. The present writer, when a youth, happened to be seated at a table in the Union League Club, one evening, at which Horace Greeley was writing an editorial. As foolscap page after page was dashed off, they fell directly under my eye, and I took the liberty of studying the chirography, a great sprawl and scrawl of hieroglyphics, till my heart ached for the poor printer who should have to set it up under the gaslight before morning. A funny story is told of a reply

which he made to a Western lecture committee, declining their invitation on the ground that he would be "sixty years old on next February 3d." The reply came, that his penmanship had taken them some time to translate; but they had succeeded, and the time, "February 3d," and terms, "sixty dollars," were entirely satisfactory. They also mistook his statement that he "must decline to lecture henceforth, except in this immediate vicinity, if at all",—answering, "As you suggest, we may be able to get you other engagements in this immediate vicinity." Another illustration is told of his writing a letter to an employé, discharging him for gross neglect of duty. After a number of years of absence in California, the man returned, and, meeting Mr. Greeley, was asked by him how he had gotten along. "Let me see," he continued, "didn't I get mad at you and send you off?" "Oh, yes, you wrote me a letter, telling me to clear out. Taking the letter with me, I found that nobody could read it; so I gave it my own interpretation as a letter of recommendation, and got several first-rate situations by it, and I am really very much obliged to you."

Mr. Greeley's own views of journalism are freely and frequently given. It was to him not so much a profession as a passion. This

extended to the minutest details of the business of making a paper, from the first and most mechanical stage to its completed issue. Each day's number was like a new canvas, to be transformed with its own significance and color. He believed that education for the editorship should begin at the bottom, and should be as natural a promotion as from the fore-castle to the cabin ; that the milk for journalistic babes was printer's-ink. Like the old *régime* of editors—the Bennetts, the Ritchies, and the Weeds—he neither had, nor did he believe in, a liberal education as a preliminary to the editorial profession. “Of all horned cattle, a college graduate in a newspaper office is the worst,” was his characteristic way of putting it ; nowadays, we doubt whether many others are or could be in the highest positions. The limitations of extreme cheapness he held to be incompatible to produce more than a mere news-letter, as distinct from a newspaper,—the mere germ of his comprehensive definition of the latter, viz., to “embody in a single sheet the information daily required by all those who aim to keep posted on every important occurrence, so that the lawyer, the merchant, the banker, the forwarder, the economist, the author, the politician, etc., may find here whatever he needs to see, and be spared the trouble to look elsewhere.”

In a letter of advice to a country editor, written in 1860, he extends with considerable minuteness this essential principle to local and rural papers. Some of the points of this kind and practical epistle should be given for their autobiographic significance. He bids his friend to begin with the clear idea that, next to himself, the average human being is most concerned about his nearest neighbors,—a thing of which it seemed to him country editors were oblivious. Therefore he should have a local correspondent, wide-awake and judicious, in every township and village of his county (indicating the kind of person and employment likely to serve the purpose best), who should promptly send every item which occurred in the churches, the business of all kinds, the real-estate transactions, or anything which was of interest to a dozen families,—every birth, marriage, and death, every house-raising, every big tree cut, or big beet grown, or big crop harvested,—statistical and historical accounts of each township. “In short, make your paper a perfect mirror of everything done in the county which its citizens ought to know; . . . make up half your journal of local matter thus collected, and nobody in the county can long do without it.” Next, his neophyte is to “take an earnest, if not a leading, part in the advancement of home industry,” promoting



fairs in the townships, and the starting of new business enterprises, whereby he would in time largely increase the population of the county and the value of every acre of its soil. Finally, "don't let the politicians and aspirants of the town own you." If he saw what they did not, "speak out; do your best" to keep down offices and expenses, and the consequent rate of taxation, except for common schools, as low as may be, remembering, "in addition to the radical righteousness of the thing, that the tax-payers take more papers than the consumers."

From one of his lectures we take a few sentences to show the views which Mr. Greeley took of his own profession, its difficulties, and its high calling. From the circumstances of the case, the editor cannot speak deliberately; "he must write of to-day's incidents and aspects, though these may be overlaid and transformed by the incidents and aspects of to-morrow. He must write and strive in the full consciousness that whatever honor and distinction he may acquire must perish with the generation that bestowed them. . . . No other public teacher lives so wholly in the present as the editor; and the noblest affirmations of unpopular truth . . . can but be noted in their day, and with their day forgotten." . . . The true editor must have "a different and a

sterner path" than the "dexterous sidler," the non-achievements of whose life are emblazoned on the whitest marble, and who is "blessed by archbishops or followed by the approving shouts of ascendant majorities." He must find his "recompense for their loss in the calm verdict of an approving conscience ; and the tears of the despised and the friendless, preserved from utter despair by his efforts and remonstrances, may freshen for a season the daisies that bloom above his grave."

In 1851 Mr. Greeley appeared before a Committee of Parliament, composed of men like Richard Cobden and Sir Milner Gibson, on the repeal of the newspaper stamp-tax. Of the valuable and ready information which he then gave of the American press, we should be remiss in not giving some items. There were fifteen dailies published in New York, ten in the morning and five in the evening, not including evening editions of morning papers ; their aggregate circulation was about one hundred and thirty thousand a day. The *Tribune* printing-press would work off only ten thousand an hour ; the *Sun*, he believed, could work off eighteen thousand. The latter paper was considered worth a quarter of a million dollars ; but its value, on account of its cheapness, was almost entirely in its advertisements. The entire number of distinct journals published in

the United States was twenty-five hundred, of which about two thousand were devoted to news and politics, and the others to science, education, and religion. About two hundred and fifty of these were dailies, issuing an aggregate of a million or more papers a day. He thought three fourths of all the families of New York took in a daily paper of some sort, even (to the surprise of the Englishmen) nearly every mechanic, who may be found reading his newspaper after breakfast or dinner, "just as the upper classes of England do." The working people did not go to public-houses to read the paper ; it is not the attraction there, and a very small proportion of the reading class go there at all. A newspaper was generally definable as "something printed as often as once a week," and the others as magazines and periodicals. The highest salary that he knew of was three thousand dollars ; the highest thinkable was five thousand dollars. The usual range, as in the *Tribune*, besides the principal editor, was fifteen hundred dollars down to five hundred dollars. He considered the newspaper reading worth all the schools in the country. It creates a taste for reading in the child, and increases his interest in his lessons. He thought the press had more and wider influence in the United States than in England ; more weight was laid upon the intelligence than the editori-

als, and the paper which brought the quickest news was the one looked to. The telegraphic despatch, and not the "leading article," was the great point. Not a hundredth part of the use was made of the telegraph in news-sending in England as in America ; about one hundred thousand dollars a year was paid by the six associated papers, besides what each got separately for itself.

Horace Greeley, as we have intimated, represented an era in journalism—the transition from the old, heavy, costly, and party-owned paper of the previous generations of the Blairs, the Ritchies, the Croswells, and the Webbs. Nothing has distinguished that epoch more than personal journalism—a journalism chiefly known by the individuality of its editorials, and that individuality a marked and even eccentric one ; the paper having a centaur-like relation to the editor—a personal organ, rather than an institution by itself. But with Mr. Greeley the last of that masterful *régime* has passed away, not because as great and individual men have not arisen, but because the swelling flood of world-intelligence and world-discussion no longer permits the little Canutes to sit and wave their sceptres on its shore.

It is interesting to note that the journalistic careers of Greeley and Bennett began and end-

ed at the same time. They both died in 1872 ; and when the job printers, Greeley & Co., were cogitating the *New Yorker* in 1834, a young man, already known as a clever writer for the press, stepped in one day and, exhibiting a modest roll of bills, invited Horace Greeley to join in starting a new cheap daily, to be called the *New York Herald*. The overture was declined, but the applicant was recommended to some other printer, who proved more willing. The young man was James Gordon Bennett, and the *Herald* soon appeared under his name, and that of the printer—who *might* have been Horace Greeley ! And if so, what then ? A newspaper critic considers Mr. Bennett at the head of those who “ seek to float on the current, instead of directing its course,” and Mr. Greeley as “ first among those who have made newspapers great controlling organs of opinion.” Another says that “ to Bennett must be given the credit of effecting a revolution in the methods of news-getting, but to Greeley the higher praise of improving upon his invention ;” in other words, they were the John Fitch and the Robert Fulton of New York journalism. But the most complete and instructive contrast comes to us from the brilliant pen of Murat Halstead : “ James Gordon Bennett was a news man ; Horace Greeley was a man of opinions—ideas, if you please. Ben-

nett's paper had the larger circulation, Greeley's the greater influence. Bennett was not of any political party, and despised them all and their leaders with them, and laughed over his own defeats. Greeley was always on higher ground than his party occupied, was hopeful of its statesmen, and grieved with a personal sorrow over its discomfitures ; . . . but he never spared the rod among his partisans, when he believed they betrayed the cause of the people. If the qualities of the two great journals could have been combined, the product would have been almost the ideal newspaper."

## CHAPTER IX.

### ORATOR AND AUTHOR.

THE generation preceding the war was the era of the Lyceum Lecture. The "Lyceum" was instituted chiefly as a village syndicate for the purpose of securing a series of lectures during the winter from men of distinction, or of special knowledge and facility of address. In the absence of telegraphic communication and the scarceness of books and newspapers, it was a real source of mental and moral education, as well as the mild dissipation of secluded communities, and even held its own respectably against the theatre and the concert in the larger cities. Of course, there was a great disparity of compensation, according to the notability or popularity of the lecturer, extending from the aspirant who was glad to get a series of engagements at ten to twenty dollars apiece to those who could command their hundred, and even two or three who were considered a safe venture at double that sum or more. Of these latter "giants" of the Lyceum stage were Henry Ward Beecher, John B. Gough, and, later, De Witt Talmage. Mr. Greeley



seems to have followed closely after, with a class headed by Dr. Chapin, Bayard Taylor, John G. Saxe, Theodore Parker, Wendell Phillips ; and, straggling along after them, E. P. Whipple, Horace Mann, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Ralph Waldo Emerson, George Sumner, and quite a legion of others. The details and engagements of the most eminent were usually made by agents ; and, of course, men like Mr. Greeley could not afford the time unless a lengthened and contiguous tour was arranged for every night in the week, if possible.

Mr. Greeley would write one or two new lectures each season, and probably lectured as often as any one who did not devote his whole attention to it. His first recorded appearance in this capacity was on January 3d, 1843, before the "New York Lyceum" at the Broadway Tabernacle, on "Human Life." This curious note is appended to the self-distrustful advertisement : "If those who care to hear it will sit near the desk, they will favor the lecturer's weak and husky voice." The lecturer's voice was not weak nor husky, unless he happened to have a sore throat at the time. It was singularly clear and high-pitched, and could be distinctly heard throughout the building, capable of holding something like three thousand. The mention of the name of this, one of the most historic buildings in this country,—

the arena of the great moral contests of a most tumultuous and fateful generation, the Exeter Hall of America, the gathering-place of the "causes," the *isms*, the clans, and the tribes of the land, which has resounded with more thunder and gleamed with more lightning of unaffected eloquence than almost any room since old Federal Hall of Philadelphia,—will bring many an undeadened memory of sacred excitement, of absorbed attention, of mental and moral education, and even of amusing incident to more than one reader's thought. It was an exceedingly plain, circular building, with the platform nearly in the centre, and deep rows of low-dipping galleries extending all around the house.

How large an audience and how effective a *début* as lecturer Horace Greeley had, we are not informed. In his meridian of fame and influence, he was sure of a large and interested, though somewhat nondescript, audience. He no more lectured for popularity or pecuniary returns, than he edited the *Tribune* with that view; nor were his lectures very different in their aim and scope from his purely journalistic work, except that he chose the less transient topics, and elaborated more his style. They were, in fact, little more than editorials on legs. He dashed into his theme without preface, and in a tone lower and a rate slower than his later

sentences. His manner was characterized by the same awkward yet headlong and pushing action with which he brushed through the streets. He had no gestures, unless a slight swing of his hand and side may be so called. He has been known to begin a lecture by saying, in his monotonous tone : “ It has been said that I am the poorest public speaker in America ;” and some who meant graceful and musical expression by good speaking were ready to agree with him,—even such as the lady who said to Mr. Barnum : “ Did you ever hear such a tedious, terrible speaker ? But what he said enchanted every hearer !” He had fine passages—some of them full of a sweet simplicity and picturesqueness, some as tender as his soft and womanly voice, and some with the undertone of a prophet—but he seemed unconscious of them, and of the frequent play of humor which lit up his style, though not his face. This, under his spectacles and bald head, maintained throughout an almost moon-like monotony, from the moment when he “ looks up at the audience with an expression of inquiring benignity,” waiting for the applause of his greeting to subside.

There was no mistaking his manner, however. Here was a man who “ meant business” with that audience. He had something of an extremely practical kind to impart, or some

neglected or despised cause to argue before them. Several of his books are chiefly compilations of his lectures, notably his "Hints Toward Reforms." His separate lectures have all the same trend, and nearly all the same class of topics. Labor, Literature, Life, Character, Education, Poetry, Organization, Capital Punishment, Total Abstinence, and various questions of Social and Political Economy, were not essentially different in their practical endeavor and yearning to help and to elevate, to liberate and to liberalize his fellow-men, especially those who in the calm of country life and in the vast development of our newer territory were to mould the character and determine the destiny of our country. These lectures were still more editorial, in the exceeding rapidity with which they were composed. "At no time," he says in the preface of a volume of them, "has it seemed practicable to devote a whole day, seldom a full half day, to the production of any of them."

But lecturing was only a small and occasional exercise of Horace Greeley's oratory. His political and campaign speaking was enough in itself for one man to do. He was quite sure to be called up for a speech at every gathering, whether mass-meeting or public dinner, at which he made his appearance, and he not only never refused, but would sometimes come

in and go out with sole reference to the fulfilment of this object. These, too, were brief editorials, pungent and direct, beginning *in medias res*, and stopping on the instant he had said his say. They were spoken in a lumbering manner and unvaried tone, but with as logical arrangement and freedom from hesitation as his written lectures. Some of his speeches, in great election canvasses, rose to the height of orations, in their fulness and mastery of treatment, and in their unconscious eloquence, and influence over assemblies. Whatever he said on any subject or occasion was never felt to be dry, much less trite, and was heard with close attention to the end. He had the faculty of Mr. Gladstone, of making figures eloquent, if not poetic. If this be not oratory, it would be difficult to form a definition which would include the essential effect and end of oratory. One of the most important and interesting of his appearances was in a public debate on a "*Resolved, That a Protective Tariff is conducive to our National Prosperity.*" It was held in the Broadway Tabernacle aforesaid, February 10th, 1843. The contesting debaters were of notable name : *Affirmative*, Joseph Blunt, then a distinguished lawyer and member of a family of distinguished lawyers, and Horace Greeley ; *Negative* : Samuel J. Tilden and Parke Godwin. We do

not know what the general impression of the discussion was ; but Mr. Greeley's speech on the occasion is a very concise and practical, yet eminently readable and even vivacious, *résumé* of " The Grounds of Protection."

As has been said, Horace Greeley's books were chiefly compilations of his lectures and his letters, such as " Hints Toward Reforms," and " Glances at Europe," composed of his foreign correspondence to the *Tribune*, both of these being published in 1851. Other *ephemera* are his " Overland Journey to San Francisco" (1860), " Essays Designed to Elucidate the Science of Political Economy" (1870), and " What I Know About Farming." The last grew out of the previous publication of a lecture delivered before a State Agricultural Society in 1853, on " What the Sister Arts Teach Us About Farming." Farming was what Mr. Greeley always thought he took most interest in, and was most adapted to. It certainly, in his later, and amateur, experience, offered him the recreative, if not restful, side of his work. Much fun has been made of his title, " What I Know About Farming," but it strikes us as an eminently felicitous one, combining a modest sense of his own limitations and an assurance to the readers that he was giving them not theories, but facts, gathered from hard ex-

perience, and the correction of early mistakes and misinstruction. It has never been shown to be an ignorant or a boastful book, and therefore justifies its title. It is only to be wished that others would spare us from the deluge of print and talk concerning what they do *not* know ; and particularly the farmers at our agricultural fairs, from their hour and a half of platitudes or of second-hand material. Horace Greeley's immortal advice to a young inquirer, "Go West, young man, go West !" was worth tons of agricultural addresses, especially when supplemented by his "Letter to an Aspiring Young Man."

His "history of the struggle for slavery extension" is substantially incorporated into his "American Conflict," and constitutes probably its most valuable part. This, his greatest achievement in book-making, was written at the solicitation of Messrs. Newton & Case, subscription-book publishers of Hartford, and was begun shortly after the battle of Gettysburg. It was an enormous load to take upon his already overburdened shoulders ; but it was directly in the line of his work as a publicist and a journalist, and, if successful, promised to provide him with a reserve fund for his later years. It was necessary, of course, to seclude himself during a much larger part of his time,—though even here he was so much in-



truded upon that he thought that, if he should ever undertake such a labor again, he should allow the location of his "den" to be known to but one person at the *Tribune* office, who should be privileged to knock only in extreme emergencies, and that the door should open only to this person, to his secretary, and to himself. He hired a room on the third floor of the Bible House, in the vicinity of four great public libraries, and engaged a secretary to explore these and other sources for material, though he often made his own searches and used his own documents. His habit was to go to this "workshop" every morning directly after breakfast and remain from eight to ten hours, to read and compare the data collected for his next chapter, or to write one already "in mind." He usually wrote his first draught, merely indicating the longer extracts and quotations for his secretary to fill in when he transcribed the whole; but he sometimes dictated to the secretary, who took shorthand notes and wrote them out at his leisure. This composing of what he had been for some time collecting, digesting, and preparing, was done with great rapidity. His first chapter was composed at one sitting, and not more than two or three days were given to his longest chapters. He thinks that the material was more copious than that from which the history

of any former event was written, yet even after passing many revisions and recastings, realizes it to be "exceedingly imperfect and contradictory." Still he indulges the hope that "The American Conflict" will long be consulted, at least by historians.

His hope has been realized. We think that few will question Professor C. K. Adams's always guarded criticism that "the first half of the first volume is perhaps the best existing portrayal of the causes that led gradually up to the conflict;" and that "it is . . . quite the most interesting of the numerous accounts of our great civil contest." Whether this judgment, delivered in 1882, would be modified by subsequent and more pretentious histories is still to be determined. Of course these latter have a vast advantage in the increase and sifting of military data, including the matured and authoritative testimony of the chief actors in those events; and, moreover, Mr. Greeley not only was not a man of military education or experience, but was throughout the war singularly unconscious of his fallibility as a strategist. The "interest" is undoubted. Horace Greeley could hardly write anything which had not the tense and terse, the real and glowing qualities which are the elements of interest. A distinguished political opponent aptly characterized "The American Conflict" as "the

fairest one-sided book ever written." The spirit and intent of its author are impressively stated in this sentence: "I proffer it as my contribution toward a fuller and more vivid realization of the truth that God governs this world by moral laws as active, immutable, and all-pervading as can be operative in any other, and that every collusion or compromise with evil must surely invoke a prompt and signal retribution."

The first volume, dedicated to John Bright, appeared in 1864, and the second, dedicated to the "Union Volunteers," in 1866. The sales were large and rapid, till, as a result of the part which Mr. Greeley took in the bailing of Jefferson Davis, they ceased altogether for a time.

The work by which Horace Greeley will longest survive as an author is undoubtedly his "Recollections of a Busy Life," originally published in the New York *Ledger*, and republished in book form, much enlarged and partly rewritten, in 1868. They are literally "recollections," being written with not even a scrap of memoranda. Hence they belong to the most genuine and delightful class of autobiography, —that unstudied and confidential talk about himself to which the Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin (to whom he bore so many analogies) belongs. There are those who, like the writer, regard these "Recollections" among

the most charming, vital, and nutritious of his books. So competent and wide a reader as Dr. T. L. Cuyler has told me that this is one of ten or a dozen books which he reads and re-reads, and always keeps within reach. It is largely taken up with his opinions, but even these are not less autobiographic, for this man's mind, its growth, its conclusions, and its contests, were himself. This was the part of him whose hat and overcoat and boots were never neglected, nor slouched. In fact, he says that his object in tardily consenting to writing the "Recollections" was the "opportunity to commend to many thousands of mainly young persons, convictions which are a part of my being, and conceptions of public events and interests which would never otherwise so fairly invoke their attention. . . . If, then, my friends will accept the essays which conclude this volume as a part of my mental biography, I respectfully proffer this book as my account of all of myself that is worth their consideration ; and I will cherish the hope that some portion, at least, of its contents embody lessons of persistency and patience which will not have been set forth in vain."

There are probably few who associate Horace Greeley with the writing of poetry. And yet his spring of life shook off its spray of song, like nearly all of us. He wrote most of his verses

—said to amount in all to about thirty-five pieces—for the *New Yorker*, though some appeared in the magazines and “Annuals” of that period. They were marked by the general character of American poetry of the time, superabounding in heroic phrase and romantic sentiment. Yet they will bear comparison with much of what appeared in “Collections” of those days. Mr. Parton has rescued several from oblivion, among which is his ode to William Wirt, “the ideal of his youthful politics ;” and some specimens of what he called “Historic Pencillings,”—that is to say, verses springing out of his impressions of early historical reading. Death and melancholy seem to have reigned over his verse, as was the fashion then. The only one which confesses to the “tender passion” is, of course, the saddest of all, and ends with a despairing “farewell !” One more may be adverted to, written on a loftier key, and doubtless interpreting much that was real and true in the author’s inmost mind. After expressing the changed look which had come over nature and life, as he had more deeply learned the want and woe and wrong which underlay them, he says :

“ Yet mourn not I,—a stern, high duty  
Now nerves my arm and fires my brain ;  
Perish the dream of shapes of beauty,  
So that *this* strife be not in vain !

‘To war on fraud intrenched with power,  
On smooth pretense and specious wrong,  
This task be mine, though fortune lower ;  
For this be banished sky and song.’

So, too, was banished the Muse herself at a very early date ; and, accordingly, when it was proposed by Mr. Bonner to make a collection of poems not found in Dana’s “ House-  
hold Book of Poetry,” he utterly refused to allow his verse to appear, bluntly saying : “ I am no poet, and never shall be. . . . I never was, even in the mists of deluding fancy. . . . Within the last ten years I have been accused of all possible and some impossible offences against good taste, good morals, and the common weal,—I have been branded aristocrat, communist, infidel, hypocrite, demagogue, dis-unionist, traitor, corruptionist, etc.,—but I cannot remember that any one has flung in my face my youthful transgressions in the way of rhyme.”

In support of his modest claim, in one of his letters, “ of knowing poetry from prose,” the reader is directed to his lecture on “ Poets and Poetry,” which is extremely good reading, whether for profit or entertainment. Few, if any, so capable critics have dared to speak out plainly what he thought, irrespective of established or fashionable canons. Homer, Virgil, and all from the Augustan age to Dante,—

and Dante himself,—Mr. Greeley thought, had much of the tedious and monotonous. He gives the palm to the Greek tragedists. The Romans were not poets. Chaucer and Spenser were bores, and there is a great deal to be discounted even from Shakespeare. After Milton, he seems to find little true poetry, as distinguished from rhymed philosophy, till Burns, the embodied voice of the people. Keats was the morning star of the new era. Byron was its greatest name. Coleridge, Campbell, and Southey—the world would lose little, if without them. Hood, Tennyson, Mr. and Mrs. Browning, and, of course, Mrs. Hemans, seem to have gone most to his heart. Truly, a modern of moderns, and a democrat of democrats! In a letter to N. P. Willis, we find him urging that gentleman to make a volume of selections from his writings for his son, so that he might try “Unwritten Music” on him, “and see if it impresses him at sixteen as it did me at about that age, when it appeared.” Another instance of his independence in literary judgment is to be found in the fact that he seems to have been about the only voice which was raised in defence of Dickens’s “American Notes,” as a calm, gentlemanly, candid, and correct judgment of what the writer saw, and confirmatory of the soundness of his head and the goodness of his heart. Mr. Greeley’s



views of literature are to be found in one of his most brilliant and interesting lectures. He especially deprecates and would dissuade from adopting literature as a "vocation." He says : " Literature is a noble calling only when the call issues from a world to be enlightened and blessed, not from a void stomach clamoring to be gratified and filled."

## CHAPTER X.

### THE REFORMER.

IN our childhood, and in the conservative circles in which we received our first impressions, Horace Greeley was quite a *bête noir*. The *Tribune* was regarded as an equally dangerous visitor at the home with the *Herald*, though for a different reason; and we were brought up on the milk-and-water diet of the E. and J. Brooks's *Express*, and the "deportment" of Colonel Watson Webb's *Courier and Enquirer*,—of course, none but Whig papers were admitted. There was a time when Horace Greeley was vigorously denounced by the solid men of America over their wine, and by timid and amiable spinsters over their tea, as hardly less perilous and improper than we now regard a Chicago anarchist. At any rate he was generally viewed as having an abnormal appetite for innovation, if not destruction.

But he was neither. He was essentially and in all things a reformer, in the literal meaning of that word—not to disorganize, but to reform. The fact is, that by temperament and training he had a singularly independent mind,

and as singularly inquiring. Without an ounce of veneration for the old or established as such, he went straight to every chambered idea and institution of the past, and picked its lock, however rusty, peering in with eyes neither blinded by its dazzle nor its dimness, intent upon furbishing and rendering it more tenantable for men. Society was to him a great fair, full of patent improvements and labor-saving machines. And Horace was a staring Moses in the Fair, with perhaps much of the foolish credulity of Goldsmith's hero, as well as a good deal of the keen and wide-looking wisdom which we associate with that name in its highest example of the great Hebrew reformer. That pure and benevolent face was an unmistakable index, for it wore an inquisitive and puzzled look, as of one who had never recovered from the surprise and impatience at having opened his eyes on such a world of disorder, wrong, and impenetrability to love and light.

He was by heredity and by idiosyncrasy a puritan of the puritans. The intensity of his moral perception and sensibility made him inquisitive and seemingly irreverent. It armed him also with a moral courage to attempt all things, and to strike through kings. He was so mastered by his moral sense that it made him masterful in his attitude toward other men,

and intolerant of their opinions. He had the imperiousness of a Cromwell, and his rudeness of speech. He was ascetic and unconventional, from absorbing earnestness of aim. That aim was a social kingdom of God on earth, a veritable and visible reign of righteousness. And yet his was a New Testament, and not an Old Testament puritanism,—not that of Balfour of Burley, but of John the Baptist. While recognizing Christ's principle, "I came not to bring peace, but a sword," he heard also the deeper strain, "My peace I give you"—a peace through the sword of the Spirit and of the naked truth. He was an intense lover of peace, a passion which furnishes the key to much of the apparent halting and inconsistency of his career, as his reforming impulse constitutes the underlying motive and the clew to his strange and stormy career as a whole. He was not a lover of confusion, but of order. He was essentially a critic, and hence a censor of life; a lover of his kind, and of those things which make for peace, and whereby one may edify another. And yet so practical was his turn of mind that he was not content to dream and write of Utopias and Platonic Republics, but must achieve something tangible, must bring the working model of his idea into household and every-day use. It was not his ambition to "hitch his wagon to a star," but rather

to somehow bring down the star where it might save horse-power on our rough roads, and to fight against the Siseras of bad government and social evils. He was a reformer not of the Rousseau type, but of the John Bright.

Did he not show these qualities in his very face? Was there ever a countenance more strangely combining—even ludicrously so—keen inquiry and almost vacant innocence, benevolence and belligerency, gentleness and defiance, speculation and scrutiny, a far-away expression, combined with a straightforwardness of look which could brook no conventionality or circumlocution, and hardly an objection.

As his reforming tendencies are the clew to his entire career, so it is not difficult to find the clews to the specific reforms which most engaged his advocacy. They are, first and foremost, an intense passion for justice to all and to each, and a chivalric impulse to espouse the cause even of an enemy or a criminal, whom he deemed to be denied his right. Like unto it, was his constitutional sympathy for the weaker side in the struggle, even though in the day of its power it had borne itself insolently and oppressively. To these are to be added a tender-heartedness, which could not endure the sight of suffering and was constantly overshadowed by a vicarious sor-

row, and rendered stern by its seemingly hopeless problems. His very kindness of nature had contributed to make his exterior rough and prickly. He was a journalistic Boythorne, whose most savage and exaggerated expressions veiled a gentleness which unduly shrank from sentimentality, and in his case a practicality which must translate itself into action. It was due not to a theoretical disposition, but to his intensely practical turn, that he was "ready to listen to any plan that promised to promote the material or spiritual welfare of society, from the construction of a plough to the establishment of a phalanstery."

We should also say that much of Horace Greeley's exaggerated reputation for radicalism and innovation, was due to that personal independence and love of free speech and fair play, which led him to open his columns to the propounding of novel and unpopular opinions. "We have plenty of requests," he said in one of the earlier numbers of the *Tribune*, "to blow up all sorts of abuses, which shall be attended to as fast as possible." He had the courage to give the *Dial*, the organ of the much-ridiculed transcendentalists, not only appreciative notices, but a full hearing in the form of copious extracts. So he gave fair and ample and courteous reports of conventions, without reference to his own position or that of public

sentiment. It was to the distastefulness of this course that the starting of the New York *Times* was due, and its immediate success as a cautious, conservative, and "proper" Whig journal. It is said to have attained a circulation of more than twenty thousand at a bound. Mr. Greeley thus explains his policy as late as April, 1859, speaking of the "*isms*" of the *Tribune*, its hobbies, and its "disorganizing doctrines":

"One mind has presided over its issues from the outset; so one golden thread of purpose may be traced through them all, under every variety of circumstance and condition." That purpose is the elevation of the masses, through the diffusion and inculcation of intelligence, freedom, industry, skill, virtue, and the consequent abolition or limitation of ignorance, idleness, pauperism, and vice. To accord a generous welcome to every novel suggestion, every unselfish effort, tending to the great end thus meditated—whether that suggestion contemplate the more perfect development and diversification of our material industry through protection to American labor, or improved facilities of intercourse with our brethren across the continent by a railroad to the Pacific, or the present limitation and ultimate abolition of human chattlehood, or the securing to every man the unchallenged possession and use of a



patch of the earth's surface, whereon to live and support his family, by the freedom of the public lands, or the diminution of human wretchedness and debasement through a war of extermination on intemperance and its accessories—is, as it has been, our unshaken purpose, our unshrinking aim." And yet this lofty and liberty-loving policy of "seeking first the kingdom of God" had the "all things else" added to it. Even the twenty thousand of the *Times* made no perceptible inroads upon the circulation of the *Tribune* for the corresponding year. Mr. Greeley only increased thereby his proportions and notableness in the public eye, and the eager interest taken in his paper. He exemplified the words of a psalmist, "In those days a man was famous as he lifted up axes on the thick trees."

One of Mr. Greeley's most interesting lectures, which has been preserved, is that in which he interprets his own views of "Reforms and Reformers." Referring to the needs of nature and the corresponding impulses of man toward improvement, he bases his discussion upon the proposition: "Man is, therefore, by primal necessity a transformer—in other words, a Reformer." In answer to those who emphasize this as a reform of man's *external* circumstances, and who urge that the end they meditate is to be attained from *within* rather

than from without,—“by improvement, not of this or that *circumstance*, but of the vital *centre-stance*,”—he asserts the prime importance of “Opportunity,” holding that “there is no practical cure for the vital woes of the pitiable which does not involve a preliminary change in their outward conditions. . . . Begin by giving back to him the earth which you have taken from under his feet, the knowledge you have monopolized, the privileges you have engrossed ; and we can better determine whether he needs anything (and what) from your charity, after he shall have recovered what is rightfully his own.”

Here is a sentence in which he unconsciously reveals much of his own deepest life : “It is a fearful gift, this of moral prescience,—the ability and the will to look straight into and through all traditions, usages, beliefs, conventionalities, garnitures, and ask, What is this *for* ? What does it signify ? If it were swept away, what would be really lost to mankind ? . . . Well does a deep thinker speak of the spirit of reform as walking up and down, ‘paving the world with eyes,’—eyes which not merely inquire and pierce, but challenge, accuse, arraign also. Happily was the prophet of old named a *seer* ; for he who rightly and deeply sees, thence *foresees*.”

Here seems to be the clew to Horace Gree-

ley's habits of simple and even austere living, his vegetarianism, his total abstinence : " The true reformer turns his eyes first inward, scrutinizing himself, his habits, purposes, efforts, enjoyments,—asking, What signifies this ? and this ? and wherein is its justification ? This daily provision of meat and drink—is its end nourishment, and its incident enjoyment (or the reverse) ? . . . Why should a score of animals render up their lives to furnish forth my day's dinner, if my own life is thereby rendered neither surer nor nobler ? Why gorge myself with dainties which cloud the brain and clog the step, if the common grains and fruits and roots and water, furnish precisely the same sustenance in simpler and less cloying guise, and are far more conducive to health, strength, elasticity, longevity ? . . . Above all, why should I fire my blood and sear my brain with liquors, which give a temporary exhilaration to the spirits at the cost of permanent depravation and disorder to the whole physical frame ? . . . And thus the sincere reformer in the very outset of his career becomes a ' teetotal ' fanatic, represented by the knavish and regarded by the vulgar as a foe to all enjoyment and cheer, insisting that mankind shall conform to his crotchets, and live on bran bread and blue cold water."

Here is his plea for socialism : " Turning

his eyes away from himself, he (the Reformer) scans the relation of man with man, under which labor is performed and service secured, and finds not absolute justice, much less love, but necessity on the one hand, advantage on the other, presiding over the general interchange of good offices among mankind. . . . One man's necessity being another's opportunity, we have no right to be surprised or indignant that the general system culminates, by an inexorably logical process, in the existence and stubborn maintenance of human slavery." He frankly admits the many failures of socialistic experiment, and admits that the sceptics are justified in doubting whether a more trustful and beneficent social order than the prevailing one is practicable, and in concluding that "the family is the only, or at least the highest, social organization whereof poor, depraved human nature is capable," and yet he lacks not heart of grace to argue and believe that "a more Christian social order is not impossible," though his only example—that of the Shakers—is not a wholly felicitous one. "Legislators! philanthropists!" he cries (he seems to be writing in some winter of peculiar distress and lack of employment), "here are two classes stand facing, eying each other—a thin plate of glass dividing them—the man within anxious to sell, and he without eager to buy ;

yet some malignant spell seems to keep them still blankly, helplessly staring at each other. There *must* be some way out of this social labyrinth, for God is good, and has not created men and women to starve for want of work.

. . . The great, the all-embracing reform of our age is therefore the Social Reform, that which seeks to lift the laboring class, as such, —not out of labor, by any means, but out of ignorance, inefficiency, dependence, and want, and to place them in a position of partnership and recognized mutual helpfulness with the suppliers of the capital which they render fruitful and efficient." He thus paints his ideal : "A community or little world wherein all freely serve, and all are amply served ; wherein each works according to his tastes or needs, and is paid for all he does or brings to pass ; wherein education is free and common as air and sunshine ; wherein drones and sensualists cannot abide the social atmosphere, but are expelled by a quiet, wholesome fermentation ; wherein humbugs and charlatans necessarily find their level ; and naught but actual service, tested by the severest ordeals, can secure approbation, and none but sterling qualities win esteem."

After a brief but emphatic reference to the abolition of capital punishment, he concludes an equally brief one on educational reform with these eminently sensible, and not at all radical,

remarks : " You may eulogize the Dignity of Labor till doomsday, without making a boot-black's calling as honorable as that of an engineer or a draughtsman ; and so long as an ignorant and stupid boor shall be esteemed wise enough, learned enough, for a competent farmer or mechanic, all spread-eagle glorification of manual labor will be demagogue cant and office-seeking hypocrisy."

His sketches of typical reformers is full of mingled amusement and pathos. He frankly admits their personal defects as a class, and their frequent unsavoriness as individuals : " I have met several in my day who were quite confident of their ability to correct Euclid's geometry, or upset Newton's theory of gravitation ; but I doubt whether one of them could have earned or borrowed two hundred dollars in the course of a year ; and nothing stumps an average reformer of things in general so completely as to be asked to settle his board-bill. I can guess with what awed apprehension the green disciple comes up from some rural hamlet or out-of-the-way village to the metropolis, there to meet for the first time the oracle of some great movement for the regeneration of the world, whose writings he has devoured with wondering admiration ; and with what blank surprise he finds himself introduced at some club-house or restaurant to said oracle—

*dislike  
can all*

a spindling, chattering, personally insignificant entity." Analyzing the *genus* Reformer, he finds the following species: The first and lowest class are the envious; akin to this class, that of the devotees of the sensual appetite; a small class whom mere force of will, or rather a spirit of antagonism, impels into the service of reform. "One of the chief sorrows of the reformer's lot is the embarrassment of headlong allies. He can never say 'A' without some one else following with a 'B,' which he is sure does not belong to the same alphabet." He considers the moral dangers of the reformer's calling as even more disheartening than its pecuniary discouragements. "'Do you know,' said a broken-down ex-lecturer for temperance, anti-slavery, etc., once to me, in a tone and with a look of deep meaning, 'that there is no life so *unhealthy* as that of a popular agitator?'"

Was there not just a trace of the prophetic in his allusion to that "most instructive spectacle of an impulsive young radical undergoing a gradual transformation into a staid, respectable conservative"? and again: "Many a fiery radical has been cooled down into placid (or acrid) conservatism by discovering that the character of his associates, the tendency of their doctrines, the ends which they contemplated, were such as he could never approve"? Cer-



tainly he modified his advocacy of many of his own early and pet reforms, if he did not cast them off altogether, and was as much denounced for a conservative at his latter end as he was reviled and persecuted for radicalism in the beginning.

When we come to analyze the "reforms" with which Horace Greeley's name is connected, we find that for the most part he simply bore his part with the mass of thinking and philanthropic men of his day. Of this class were, his struggle against slavery extension, his co-operation in the total-abstinence movement, his advocacy of the abolition of the death penalty, and his early championship of the removal of woman's disabilities and the enlargement of her sphere of labor and opportunity. In none of these did he identify himself with the extremists of those movements. Besides these, he toyed with two or three erratic experiments, such as vegetarianism and spirit-rappings,—the latter simply in curiosity and with a final adverse verdict, and the former with large modification in practice, if not a virtual abandonment, in his later years. These we shall merely touch upon a little farther on. This leaves just one reform measure which can fairly be regarded as radical, or as a specialty of the man,—his favorable attitude toward the socialistic philosophy taught by Fourier, and attempted

by various practical experiments in this country. He might have said with the Moor :

“ The very head and front of my offending  
Hath this extent—no more.”

Horace Greeley's course on the question of slavery is so involved in his political career, which we shall narrate at length elsewhere, that little need be said here. He was educated in a hearty disapproval of that system, but it was not till he became convinced that the slave power was the aggressor, and not on its defence, that he favored political action, and then only under the strict letter of the Constitution, and confined to the narrow sphere of the Federal jurisdiction. He never was an Abolitionist till the slaveholding States had forfeited their rights by rebellion, and when he saw that emancipation was necessary to military success and the secure re-establishment of the Union. From that time on he was peremptory in his demands, and unswerving throughout all his most conciliatory, if not retrogressive, views of peace and reconstruction. He was always a Whig, which in this country stood for political conservatism. As a Free-soiler and Republican, his place was not with the radicals of the party, as regarded measures, though his Boythorn-ism rendered his language often liable to extreme and offensive interpretation, both North and South ; in fact, his attitude became

more and more antagonistic to the left wing of his party, till the dominance of that element forced him to break loose from the party altogether. Hence he enjoyed the distinction, in the year 1856, of being indicted by a grand jury in Virginia for circulating therein, a newspaper, "the object and purpose of which was to advise and incite negroes in this State to rebel and make insurrection, and to inculcate resistance to the rights of property of masters in their slaves in the State of Virginia." The indictment was specifically based upon an account of a negro hunt, quoted from the *Pittsburgh Despatch*. The *Tribune's* reply was to make merry with the nondescript and disreputable characters who were supposed to have incited and carried through the indictment.

At another time (1854) a man of Mississippi wrote to the "Hon. Horace Greeley" a letter, offering to sell a bright mulatto girl, intelligent and beautiful, aged between twenty-eight and thirty, at the exceedingly low and accommodating price of one thousand dollars, though she would easily bring sixteen hundred dollars,—for he was willing to lose, in order that she might "obtain her freedom." She was the daughter of a Judge Hopkins, to pay whose debts she had been sold at seven years of age. She was well educated, and spoke French and German almost to perfection, and was

the best cook and seamstress in the county. "Catherine is honest ; and for the ten years that I have owned her I never struck her a lick, about her work or anything else." In replying, Mr. Greeley took pains to disregard the man's request of anonymity by printing his name in full, that request seeming to him "inspired by a modesty and self-sacrifice unsuited to the Age of Brass we live in." After much of sarcasm that must have been exceedingly scorching even to the callous hide of his correspondent, and an earnest and ingenious effort to make the fellow realize in some measure the absurdity, inconsistency, and meanness of his hypocritical presentation of the case, he informs him that he is mistaken in supposing that ["the friends of Liberty in this quarter will fight her battles either with lead or steel, much less with gold." "Their trust," he concludes, "is in the might of opinion ; in the resistless power of truth, where discussion is untrammelled, and commercial intercourse constant ; in the growing humanity of our age ; in the deepening sense of common brotherhood ; in the swelling hiss of Christendom and the just benignity of God. In the earnest faith that these must soon eradicate a wrong so gigantic and so palpable as Christian slavery, they serenely await the auspicious hour which must surely come." ]

One of Horace Greeley's most characteristic acts, for its superiority to mere applause or present popularity, and its almost sublime audacity and frankness, and withal his incapacity to approach any subject except from its most immediate and practical aspect, was the brief fifteen-minute address he made at Exeter Hall, London, at the anniversary of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, the question under discussion being : " What can we Britons do to hasten the overthrow of slavery ? " His whole address was designed to enforce upon their minds that the first and best thing for English Abolitionists to do to hasten the overthrow of slavery elsewhere, was to emancipate workingmen from their ill-paid and socially depressed condition at home ; for Englishmen to learn respect for man as man, without regard to class or calling ; to do away with those social evils and degradation of manual workers, particularly in England, which are relied on by American slaveholders to justify the continuance of slavery ; and finally to colonize our slave States by a class of intelligent, industrious, and virtuous laborers who should demonstrate that they can be cultivated and their great staples produced, otherwise than by the toil of slaves. Exeter Hall took its dose of wholesome counsel in silence, but evidently with no enthusiastic relish.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE REFORMER (*continued*).

HORACE GREELEY was brought up in a day and a community where the universal and free drinking of hard cider, peach brandy, and New England rum was not only a matter of course, but regarded as a matter of necessity. None of the labors or the festivities of life could be carried on without it. Alike in seed-time and harvest, haying and wood-chopping, cold and heat, "raisings" and dancings, militia trainings, elections, and ministerial ordinations, weddings and christenings and funerals, in the transaction of business and the proffer of hospitality, and even in the regular home-life of families, the jug was kept in lively circulation. "In many a family of six or eight persons," he says, "a barrel tapped on Saturday barely lasted a full week. . . . So that whole families died drunkards and vagabond paupers from the impetus first given by cider-swilling in their rural homes." Men's eyes were yet to be opened to the deluge of degradation, bankruptcy, and wretchedness they were letting in upon themselves, their homes and communities.

Horace's own father, it is understood, owed his financial ill-successes largely to this leakage.

The boy himself never fell into this indulgence, and as early as January 1st, 1824, adopted total abstinence as the result solely of his own observation and conclusions. He had heard of persons who had made a kindred resolve, but had not known one. The American Temperance Society was yet unknown, and did not adopt the principle of total abstinence till 1833. His resolve was a private one, but as it became known it excited curiosity, and even a stronger feeling. At the next sheep-washing he was formally condemned, and, on his declining to take a glass of liquor, he was held by two or three of the older and stronger boys while the liquor was forced into his mouth, and some of it down his throat. This attempt to put an end to his "foolish singularity" was a total failure, and, soon after his removal to Poultney, he took part in organizing the first local temperance society. He was thenceforth, to the end of his life, earnest and unremitting in his advocacy of this cause, but he never was in the least fanatical on the subject, especially in the direction of political action and legal restraint. When such laws were made, he did his best for their enforcement ; but he deprecated the premature enactment of "Maine Laws" where a determined public sentiment



could not be depended on for their enforcement. The friends of temperance, he said, must not consider what they desire to see accomplished, but what *may* be done,—they must look at things as they *are* (the italics are his). The only available provision bearing on much of the traffic, which could be urged with any prospect of success, was “the imposition of a *real* license-tax (say from one hundred to one thousand dollars per annum), which would have the effect of diminishing the evil by rendering less frequent and less universal the temptations which lead to it.”

We add an interesting extract from a letter, written August 12th, 1855, to Sarah Pellet, who seems to have urged him to induce Henry Ward Beecher to come out to California and speak for the temperance cause. He writes : “I will try to see him after his return to town, but I have no hope of persuading him to go to California. Indeed, I can but feebly urge it, if at all. I doubt whether he is more needed anywhere else than in this Babel, where we have yet to make desperate efforts to procure some sort of respect for the liquor law. It is doing good through nearly all the rural districts, but the cities generally defy it, with the help of the judges and lawyers. We must try it again. And we haven’t a single Beecher to spare in the contest. He might make a tem-

porary sensation in California, but the waters would close in behind him. I have little faith in cometary influences. . . . For my own part, I dislike public speaking, and am trying to avoid it for the future ; but I am glad to know that others do better in it. We are to have John B. Gough back from England next week. If he could be allured to California, he would do more good there than even Beecher, I suspect."

It was in accordance with his own temperament and with the spirit of the time that Mr. Greeley should take a deep interest in the movement, which reached its height about forty years ago, to abolish capital punishment. His tender-heartedness, combined with his ruthless habit of applying to all things the test-question "*Cui bono?*" led him, as early as 1836, to take the ground that the punishment of death is one which should be "resorted to as unfrequently as possible. Nothing, in our view, but cold-blooded, premeditated, unpalliated murder can fully justify it." Within a few years, however, he was at the front of the agitation to abolish the death penalty altogether, both with the pen and on the platform. The reform seemed to be going swimmingly forward, until the wholesale application of capital punishment to the Rebellion rendered the movement a painfully ludicrous anachro-

nism. Mr. Greeley himself felt constrained to drop the subject, and never to revive it except in a very general and passing way. In a lecture published under his sanction as late as 1868, speaking of "the efforts, but yesterday so earnest and active, now so languid and unapparent," he says: "Perhaps this effort has already succeeded so far as it was best it should succeed at present,—that is, so far that some States in the West, as others in the East, have absolutely, and others virtually, abolished the death penalty. If we could now forget the whole subject for ten years, we might, at the close of that period, compare carefully and searchingly the prevalence of crime in the States respectively, which have abolished and those which have retained the gallows, and strike an instructive balance between them. For the present, let it suffice that no one appears now to be seriously contending that life is less safe or crime more prevalent in the States which destroy no lives, than in others. I rejoice in the hope that the progress of Christianity, civilization, and liberty, will yet drive the gallows altogether from the earth."

It is doubtless to the same shrinking from the infliction of suffering, that his decided attitude and pronounced views in opposition to war are due. He antagonized an appeal to arms in every instance during his public career :

the " Fifty-four-forty or Fight " craze, which came so near involving us in a war with England on the Oregon boundary in 1842 ; the Mexican War ; and even (as we shall see) the coercion of the seceding States in 1861. Yet so far from being an extremist on this subject was he, that if he had been a delegate to the great Peace Convention in London in 1851, whose sessions he attended with interest, he tells us that he would have felt it his duty to throw a bomb into their midst by a resolution affirming the right of a nation, wantonly invaded or intolerably oppressed, to resist force by force.

The *Tribune* under Mr. Greeley was an early and constant advocate of the movement to remove the political, industrial, and social disabilities of woman, and was recognized as a valuable and reliable ally by the Convention at Worcester in 1869, under the leadership of Mrs. Julia Ward Howe.

While on the subject of political reforms, it is worth while to record a sentence to indicate Mr. Greeley's view of the reform of politics itself. As early as 1848, long before Mr. Jenks, of Rhode Island, had begun his agitation for civil service reform in Congress, Horace Greeley, at a Whig meeting in New York, expressed his trust " that the day is not distant when an amendment of the Federal Constitu-

tion will give the appointment of postmasters and other local officers to the people, and strip the President of the enormous and anti-republican patronage which now causes the whole political action of the country to hinge upon its Presidential elections." In nothing did he glory more in his great political idol than to be able to quote Elisha Whittlesey's saying at the close of his long service as Comptroller of the Treasury: "Even Mr. Calhoun has increased his charge of mileage since the old horseback and stage-coach days; and there is just one man in Congress who charges mileage now as all did then; that man is HENRY CLAY" (the capitals are his own).

In accordance with his own views of the Reformer (already quoted briefly), he began at home,—that is, to reform himself in the matter of his food. Under the influence of Sylvester Graham, in 1831-32, he adopted the dietary system taught by that gentleman, and became an inmate of the boarding-house which the "Doctor" established for its practical exemplification. He himself, however, never wholly rejected the use of meat or tea. But he always contended that "a diet made up of sound grain (ground, but unbolted), ripe, undecayed fruits, and a variety of fresh wholesome vegetables, with milk, butter, and cheese, and very little of spices or condiments, will enable our grand-

children to live, in the average, far longer, and fall far less frequently into the hands of the doctors, than we do. . . . Other things being equal, I judge that a strict vegetarian will live ten years longer than a habitual flesh-eater, while suffering, in the average, less than half so much from sickness as the carnivorous must." He was by no means optimistic of dietetic reforms, but was convinced, by the observation and experience of a third of a century, that all public danger lay in the direction opposite to that of vegetarianism, and "that a thousand fresh Grahams let loose each year upon the public, will not prevent the consumption, in the average, of far too much and too highly seasoned animal food; while all the Goughs and Neal Dows that ever were, or can be scared up, will not deter the body politic from pouring down its throat a great deal more 'fire-water' than is good for it."

Mr. Greeley's name has been unduly and incorrectly identified with the earlier phenomena of so-called Spiritualism. In 1845, in pursuance of his policy of free speech in the *Tribune*, he added a full exposition of Andrew Jackson Davis's "Revelations," but without any expression of opinion concerning them as of supernatural origin. In the spring of 1848 the "Rochester rappings" made their appearance, but attracted no particular attention from

him until two or three years after when the Fox sisters visited his wife, who was then specially interested in things pertaining to the unseen world on account of the recent death of her child. Among those who were present at the "séances" at his house were Jenny Lind, and N. P. Willis, who wrote some papers on the subject in the *Home Journal*. In his "Recollections" he relates some "manifestations" at the time, which puzzled but by no means convinced or converted him. "Not long afterward," he says, "I witnessed what I strongly suspected to be a juggle or trick on the part of a 'medium,' which gave me a disrelish for the whole business, and I have seen very little of it since." Among the seven heads, under which he formally sums up his reasons for not devoting his time to further "investigation," was this: that, on the whole, it seemed to him that the great body of the Spiritualists had not been rendered "better men and women—better husbands, wives, parents, and children—by their new faith. . . . I judge that laxer notions respecting marriage, divorce, chastity, and stern morality generally, have advanced in the wake of Spiritualism."

This leads us to notice Mr. Greeley's peculiarly strong and conservative stand upon the questions of Marriage and Divorce,—and we do so especially because there still lingers an ig-



norant, if not wilful, misunderstanding of him on this matter, arising probably out of the general carelessness to distinguish the associative principle in itself from anarchic and licentious theories of Communism. His views are very distinctly and characteristically stated in a discussion which he held in the *Tribune*, in the year 1860, with Robert Dale Owen, of Indiana. He argues for the indissolubility of the marriage compact, except on the single ground admitted by Jesus of Nazareth, whom he bluntly tells Mr. Owen, "I must consider a better authority as to what is 'Christian' and what 'pleases God' than you are." He defines marriage, according to Webster and Worcester and the marriage service, as "for life" and "till death shall separate them," and demands that those who think they have found a better substitute should "give their bantling a distinctive name, and not appropriate ours. They have been often enough warned off our premises; shall we never be able to shame them out of their unwarrantable poaching?"

Again: "Marriage is a matter which concerns not only the men and women who contract it, but the State, the community, mankind. . . . No couple can innocently take upon themselves the obligations of marriage until they KNOW that they are one in spirit, and so must remain forever. If they rashly lay profane

hands on the ark, theirs alone is the blame ; be theirs alone the penalty. They have no right to cast it on that public which admonished and entreated them to forbear, and admonished and entreated in vain."

We give only one more racy extract, chiefly because it gives the consistent link between Mr. Greeley's position on this question of marriage and that which he held on Socialism, to which we are next to advert : "The vice of our age, the main source of its aberrations, is a morbid egotism which overrides the gravest social necessities in its mad pursuit of individual, personal ends. Your fling at that 'intangible generality called SOCIETY' is directly in point. You are concerned chiefly for those who, having married unfortunately, if not viciously, seek relief from their bonds. I am anxious rather to prevent or, at least, to render infrequent"—such mistakes hereafter. "'It is very hard,' said a culprit to the judge who sentenced him, 'that I should be so severely punished for merely stealing a horse.' 'Man,' replied the judge, 'you are *not* so punished for merely stealing a horse, but *that horses may not be stolen.*' The distinction seems to me vital and just."

Besides his vegetarianism, Horace Greeley had really no "*ism*" except that particular form of socialistic experiment known as Fou-

rierism. We use the word "ism" in the sense of a personal hobby, or an ultra and *outré* phase of specific reform, as distinguished from a general movement enlisting the sympathy and co-operation of inquiring and philanthropic minds. We have advanced, and are advancing every day, so fast along the line of associative living and labor, that it would be needless to defend Mr. Greeley, or to deny him due credit for his brave and unpopular pioneer work; and our only concern is to trace his temporary connection with a special theory, and certain experiments with which his name was prominently allied. On the general subject we simply quote his own words, published in thoughtful retrospect in the year 1868: "I believe in association, or co-operation, or whatever name may be given to the combination of many heads and hands to achieve a beneficent result which is beyond the means of one or a few of them,—for I perceive that vast economies and vastly increased efficiency may be thus secured; I reject Communism as at war with one of the strongest and most universal instincts,—that which impels each worker to produce and save for himself and his own. . . . That 'many hands make light work,' is an old discovery; it shall yet be proved that the combined efforts of many workers make labor efficient and ennobling, as well as attractive.

In modern society, all things tend unconsciously toward grand, comprehensive, pervading reforms. The steamboat, the railroad, the omnibus, are but blind gropings toward an end which, unpremeditated, shall yet be attained ; in the order of nature, nothing ultimately resists an economy ; and the skeptical, sneering world shall yet perceive and acknowledge that in many important relations, and not merely in one, 'it is not good for man to be alone.' . . . Religion often makes practicable that which were else impracticable, and divine love triumphs where human science is baffled. Thus I interpret the past successes and failures of Socialism."

Mr. Greeley's thoughts and observations during the winter of 1837-8 (perhaps marked by the greatest destitution, dearth of employment, and paralysis of business, which our country has ever seen) impelled him to write for the *New Yorker* a series of articles entitled, "What Shall be Done for the Laborer?" About the time when these appeared two years later, a Mr. Albert Brisbane, of Batavia, N. Y., a young gentleman of varied culture and extensive travel, who had made a special study of the socialistic schools of Europe, and whose attention had been attracted by the articles, published an exposition and commendation of Charles Fourier's industrial system. That sys-

tem, as distinguished from the competing schemes of St. Simon and Robert Owen, is thus epitomized by Mr. Greeley: "Society, as we find it, is organized rapacity" (this expression must not be confounded with Prudhon's maxim that "property is robbery"). "Half of its force is expended in repressing or resisting the jealousies or rogueries of its members. We need universal justice, based on science. The true Eden lies before, not behind us. We may so provide that labor, now repulsive, may be attractive; while its efficiency in production shall be increased by improvement in machinery and the extended use of natural forces, so as to secure abundance, education, and elegant luxury to all. What is needed is to provide all with homes, employment, instruction, good living, the most effective implements, machinery, etc., securing to each the fair and full recompense of his achievement. And this can be best attained through the association of some four to five hundred families in a common household, and in the ownership and cultivation of a common domain, say of two thousand acres, or about one acre to each person living thereon."

While preferring this system as the most suggestive and practical, "though in many respects erratic, mistaken, and visionary," Mr. Greeley explicitly declared his independence of

all "masters" or methods. He found "many of his speculations fantastic, erroneous, and (in my view) pernicious." His own "social creed" is given in full in his "Recollections of a Busy Life," and may be thus briefly outlined: "There need be and should be no paupers who are not infantile, idiotic, or disabled; and civilized society pays more for the support of able-bodied pauperism than the necessary cost of its extirpation." "They babble idly and libel Providence who talk of surplus labor, or the inadequacy of capital to supply employment to all who need it." Through what he calls "social anarchy," bad management, and waste of energy, "it is quite within the truth to estimate the annual product of our national industry at less than one half of what it might be if better applied and directed;" "inefficiency in production is paralleled by waste in consumption. . . . I judge that the cooks of Paris would subsist one million persons on the food consumed or wasted by six hundred thousand in this city, feeding them better than they are now fed, and prolonging their lives by an average of five years." "Every child should be trained to skill and efficiency in productive labor, and the hours of children should be alternately devoted to labor, study, and recreation—say two hours to each before, and a like allotment after, dinner,

each secular day ;” . . . not till one has achieved the fullest command, the most varied use of *all* his faculties and powers, can he be properly said to be educated ;” “ isolation is at war with efficiency and with progress, and the poor work at perpetual disadvantage in isolation.” Under the association principle (four or five hundred heads of families combining to embark in agriculture on a common domain), “ one fourth, at most, of the land required under the old system would be found abundant ; it could be far better allotted to grain, grass, fruits, forest, garden, etc. ; the draught animals, that were far too few when dispersed among five hundred owners on so many different farms, would be amply sufficient for a common domain ; steam and water power could now be economically employed for a hundred purposes (cutting and sawing timber, threshing and grinding grain, ploughing the soil, and for many household uses) where the small farmer could not think of employing it.” And lastly, new incentives to industry and a new zest to life would be imparted by the *esprit de corps* of a unified community, and by the means of recreation which it could provide which are now out of the reach of rural workers.

These views were occasionally presented by Mr. Greeley in the *Tribune*, beginning about a year after its start ; and its columns were also



used for several years, by permission or by purchase, by Mr. Brisbane and others for the statement and discussion of their ideas. Few converts were gained and many antagonists aroused, but several experiments were made "to realize our social Utopia," as he calls it. The first and only attempt in New England was the famous one known as "Brook Farm," in Roxbury, near Boston. The subsequent fame of some of its founders and helpers—such as George Ripley, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Charles A. Dana, John S. Dwight, W. H. Channing, Margaret Fuller, O. A. Brownson, C. P. Cranch, Parke Godwin, George Wm. Curtis, Theodore Parker, and Greeley himself,—have given it a sort of classic immortality; but it was a pecuniary failure, being disbanded after a trial of six years (1841-7), barely paying its debts.

The "North American Phalanx" was the experiment with which Horace Greeley was more immediately connected. It was organized in 1843, had a farm of six hundred and seventy-three acres near Red Bank, N. J., with a capital of one hundred thousand dollars subscribed and loaned by its members. It did not succeed, but was not bankrupt on its closing up in 1850, each stockholder receiving about sixty-five per cent on his investment with interest, after payment of the debts.

This was the last attempt to carry Fourierism into practical operation. Mr. Greeley frankly admits that if this enterprise could not live, there was no hope for any other.

Another curious admission was that the serious obstacle of any socialist experiment lay in the kind of persons who are naturally attracted to it. "Along with many noble and lofty souls whose impulses are purely philanthropic, and who are willing to labor and suffer reproach for any cause that promises to benefit mankind, there throng scores of whom the world is quite worthy—the conceited, the crotchety, the selfish, the headstrong, the pugnacious, the unappreciated, the played-out, the idle, and the good-for-nothing generally, who, finding themselves utterly out of place and at a discount in the world as it is, rashly conclude that they are exactly fitted for the world as it should be." These are apt to clutch with self-confidence the responsible positions, and to wreck what might have succeeded if engineered by its best members.

It was on this very point—the inherent weakness of human nature—that Mr. Henry J. Raymond most pertinaciously and successfully pressed Mr. Greeley in the great discussion of 1846, to which we have already alluded in our account of the *Tribune*. "The *Tribune's* admission," writes Mr. Raymond, "that an as-

sociation of indolent or covetous persons could not endure without a moral transformation of its members, seems to us fatal to the whole theory of association. It implies that individual reform must precede social reform, which is precisely our position. But how is individual reform to be effected? *By association*, says the *Tribune*. That is, the motion of the water-wheel is to produce the water by which alone it can be set in motion; the action of the watch is to produce the mainspring without which it cannot move."

Altogether, this brilliant and powerful onslaught, coming on the heels of admitted failure, and aimed at admitted and essential weaknesses, served as a *coup de grâce* to Fourierism, and Mr. Greeley's allusions to the subject were henceforth few and far between. According to Mr. Thurlow Weed, "Mr. Greeley's delusion cost him dearly in many ways. For a season it lessened the circulation and influence of his paper, and impaired public confidence in his judgment; while the time, labor, and money given to 'phalanxes' and 'Brook Farms' resulted in personal mortification and pecuniary loss." He differed from Mr. Weed as to its political bearings, believing that a chief source of weakness to the Whig Party had been its repelling, by its "silk-stocking" and gold-handled-cane conservatism, "all the devotees

of social reform of any kind, all the advocates of a higher destiny for labor, all the combatants against unjust and false social principles—in short, all the social discontent of the country,” which thus formed “a heavy dead-weight” against it.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE POLITICIAN : AS A WHIG.

HORACE GREELEY had a "natural bent" for politics, just as Paul Morphy had for chess, or Paul du Chaillu for lion-hunting. It was to him more than "a game," as it is sometimes called ; it had all the reality of war. He was profoundly interested in the massing and deploying, and the collision of men in civic strife. He had the stern joy of battle in political contests and "campaigns," in strategy and tactics, in leaders, defeats and victories, as Lord Wolseley in the science and movements of war. He records himself as having been an ardent politician when he was "not yet half old enough to vote." Nor was this a mere partisan sentiment, but an intelligent study. A contemporary of his earliest apprenticeship testifies to his already having learned to observe and remember political statistics, the leading men and measures of parties, the multitudinous candidates for State, Congressional, and district offices all over the country. He was all this in the log-cabin of his father, as he huddled himself up in the chimney-corner to read by his

pine knot, or as he lay in ambush for the local paper to have the first reading.

His first distinct consciousness of being in a campaign was the Presidential election of 1824, in which, among the four Republican or Democratic candidates (those names, since so antagonistic, meant the same thing then), he gave his entire sympathies to the union of the supporters of John Quincy Adams and of Henry Clay, to defeat, first, the caucus candidate, Mr. Crawford, of Georgia, and, secondly, General Jackson. In fact, he here may be said to have donned his politico-editorial spurs, for among the paragraphs which he wrote for the *Northern Spectator*, an Adams paper, he doubtless put in his little word for his candidate. By the next election, in 1828, the latter had succeeded in getting himself "hurrahed" to the front, and by persistent reiteration had impressed the popular mind with the idea that the junction of Adams and Clay had been a corrupt cabal, and purchase of the Presidency at the price of the Secretaryship of State. In common with all the community of East Poultney (which cast not more than half a dozen votes for the "Hero of New Orleans"), Horace was altogether opposed to Jackson. He tells us that he had "studied pretty thoroughly and without prejudice the character of this man Jackson," his bullying and brow-beating, his

duels and horse-racings and street-fights, his outrages upon martial and civil law, and had convinced himself that "the man never was a Democrat in any proper sense of the term, but a violent and lawless despot after the pattern of Cæsar, Cromwell, and Napoleon, and unfit to be trusted with power,"—an opinion which he carried, with slight mitigation, throughout his political life. In fact, we find that a large proportion of his most strenuous and characteristic opinions were formed at this very early age. Even in 1824, though living over the Vermont line in a rustic and secluded community, he acquired an unconquerable repugnance to what was known as the Albany Regency, which had endeavored to cram Crawford down the Democratic throat, and to establish the first great "machine" in the machine-ridden "Empire" State.

Nevertheless, Horace did not continue his direct support to Adams or Clay in 1832, but was swept aside by the Anti-Mason excitement to the support of William Wirt, who, next to Henry Clay, was the political leader who most won his heart throughout all his life. It was very characteristic of his liberty-loving spirit to embark upon that singular crusade against what was generally believed to be a new Jesuitry or Venetian council,—a prejudice which extended to all secret societies to the day of his death.



Whether or not the printer's boy had much to do with the result, certain it is that Vermont was the only State which cast its vote for Mr. Wirt.

This brings us to the important point in Horace Greeley's life—his coming to New York—which, as we intimated in our opening chapter, was at the threshold of a new era in politics as in many other things. (He arrived in the city on the second of the three days' election.) For it was during this last term of Jackson that the political genius of Martin Van Buren created the present Democratic Party, and evolved the economic tenets of its creed. Greeley found himself already in antagonism to these, both those which were distinctly declared and those which were latent and not as yet peculiar. As respects the former, he was, from a mere youth (and, as he claims, by an impartial study of both sides, most of the papers he saw being from Boston), a Protectionist. "We Vermonters were all Protectionists," he candidly adds. Poultney, in particular, bravely acquitted itself of all responsibility for "whatever disaster the political revolution" in this direction "might involve," by giving an almost unanimous vote against Jackson.

Several years previous to this time, Horace Greeley had become a pronounced advocate of

paper money, from the reading of Dr. Franklin's Autobiography. But he wanted it "to be *money*, convertible at pleasure into coin," and hence was "not partial to local emissions of paper," but a zealous, determined advocate of a National Bank, and, of course, an ardent opponent of the New Democracy in "the United States Bank war which had already been inaugurated by General Jackson's imperious will." It was this question especially which touched New York, the commercial heart and nerve of the country, to the quick; and here arose, in the local election of April, 1834, the organized opposition which (in order to indicate their uprisal against what they considered unwarranted encroachments of the Executive power) called themselves "Whigs." It was not long afterward, by the way, that they tried to fasten the name "Loco-foco" upon their opponents, on account of an odd incident at a meeting where *loco-foco* matches figured, and quite successfully, for a time. At any rate, it was Horace Greeley's habit to call the Democrats "Loco-focos" long after its significance had died away, like the blaze and stench of the match itself.

Mr. Greeley pronounces this election as the most vehement and keenly contested struggle which he ever witnessed, and the total vote polled as probably a closer approach to the

whole number of legal voters than was ever drawn out before or since. The "Jacksonites" elected the mayor, but the Whigs carried both branches of the Common Council, so that the result was generally regarded as a drawn battle. In the State election, in the fall, however, the new party was less successful,—owing, in Mr. Greeley's opinion, to the "factitious but seductive semblance of prosperity, and the inflation which preceded the impending collapse." This was the first appearance in Federal politics of William H. Seward, then thirty-four years old and a distinguished member of the State Senate. He was the Whig candidate for Governor, but William L. Marcy was re-elected by an increased majority; and the Whigs fell into a discouraged state, which enabled the "Fox of Lindenwald" to run into the White House under the folds of General Jackson's cloak in 1838. The candidate of the Whigs, and of Mr. Greeley, was General William Henry Harrison; but, strange to say, he aroused at that time so little enthusiasm that, notwithstanding an independent Jackson nomination of Hugh L. White which ran with great strength in the South, the regular Jacksonian ticket was triumphant. It never ceased to be a source of surprise to Horace Greeley that Martin Van Buren was elected. He could discover in him no elements of power or personal

magnetism which should make him a successful leader, and believed that "his strength lay in his suavity," his adroitness and subtlety, combined with "the personal favor and imperious will of Andrew Jackson, with whom 'Love me, love my dog' was an iron rule." Had he lived to read Mr. Edward M. Shepard's "Life of Martin Van Buren" (in the American Statesman Series), he might have learned that it was the political brain and creative genius of the "Loco-foco" party, which was fitly selected for its first distinctively party President. Moreover, Horace Greeley was long—too long—in learning the truth that it is not the greatest man, but just the most "subtle and adroit," or else the least objectionable (or "most available," which is often the same thing), who stands the best chance to become what was predicted of himself in his boyhood—"President of the United States."

When the time came for the Whig nomination of 1840, Mr. Greeley seems to have fallen with strange readiness into the general opinion that his favorite, Henry Clay, could not be elected, and to have followed the lead of Governor Seward and Thurlow Weed in urging the renomination of General Harrison. The truth has long since been demonstrated that Mr. Clay, or any other good nominee, could have been carried in on the political reaction caused

by the commercial collapse of 1837. But the "expediency" candidate proved to be the magnetic name. The country had waked up to an enthusiasm for precisely the same individual whom it had looked at with indifference four years ago,—an enthusiasm, which has never been equalled in the history of Presidential elections. Perhaps it would be more correct to say that it was not the same nominee in both cases. It was William Henry Harrison who was defeated in 1837; it was "Tippecanoe" who was elected in 1840. The platform in the former case was Bank and Tariff; in the latter it was Log-Cabin and Hard Cider.

It was while the "political earthquake" was at its height, that Horace Greeley was discovered by the Albany Whig *régime*, and set to grinding in the mills of campaign journalism. His *Jeffersonian* was the standard of "the new era in politics" during the year 1838, when an unprecedented vote was brought out in the fall election, and Mr. Seward was elected Governor over Marcy,—Mr. Greeley regarding the result as an evidence of the efficiency of his efforts. The *Log-Cabin*, which was his contribution to the campaign of 1840 (inaugurated nearly a year before the date of election, at the first Whig National Convention, and the second national convention ever held by any party), was the very key-note and bugle-call of

that extraordinary political "tally-ho." Says its editor, with considerable *naïveté*: "They had campaign and other papers, good speakers and large meetings; but we were far ahead of them in singing and in electioneering emblems and mottoes, which appealed to popular sympathies." Among other results was Mr. Seward's re-election to the Governorship by a small majority, which was doubtless due to the apt and enthusiastic exertions of Horace Greeley.

The speedy death of General Harrison—then an old man, unable to endure the exposure of inauguration day, or the exhausting receptions and public duties of his office—was one of those instances which throughout proved the unfitness of the Whigs for practical politics. Still more so was the treachery of John Tyler, who had been named for the Vice-Presidency merely as a sop to the friends of Mr. Clay—he is said to have wept when it was announced that Mr. Clay had been defeated for the superior place, and Mr. Greeley thinks it was those tears which won him the nomination. The exasperation of the baffled and cheated Whigs gave rise to scenes of excitement which have hardly been equalled in the most intense crises of the War against the Rebellion. I well remember reading a debate in which Mr. Stanley, of North Carolina, spoke of President



Tyler as "that incarnate fiend at the other end of the Avenue!" But Mr. Greeley—whose first number of the *Tribune*, it will be remembered, appeared on the day of President Harrison's funeral pageant in the streets of New York—was slow to believe in Tyler's turpitude, and even found excuses for Mr. Webster's remaining in the Cabinet for months after all the rest had left. So late as December, 1841, he was led off by one of those unaccountable freaks of playing the Pacificator, which were the weakness and final ruin of his career, to visit Washington with the idea that he "could be of service in bringing about a complete reconciliation between the Administration and the Whigs in Congress and in the country." The only result was to give long-standing offence to his party, and compel the tardy admission that "the *Chief* of the Administration did not desire a reconciliation, upon the basis of sustaining Whig principles and Whig measures, with the party he had so deeply wronged, but was treacherously coquetting with Loco-focoism, and fooled with the idea of a re-election."

Though the Presidential campaign of 1844 made no outward mention of the Slavery Question, this was really the underlying issue upon which it turned. The slavery propagandists had long before fixed their eyes upon Texas, and had secured its independence under their



bandit chief, Sam Houston, in the spring of 1836. With the co-operation of President Tyler and his Secretary of State, John C. Calhoun, they were now bending their energies to secure its annexation to the United States. They succeeded in preventing, through Southern votes, the renomination of Mr. Van Buren, who had not given them satisfactory assurances, and procuring the nomination of James K. Polk, who had positively declared himself an advocate of immediate annexation. The Free-Soil sentiment of the New York Democrats was not sufficiently ripened to carry the State against Van Buren's successful rival, even though their candidate for Governor, Silas Wright, proclaimed in his speeches that annexation should only take place under conditions which gave free labor equal advantage with slave labor.

When it came to the election, Mr. Clay, who had at last received the nomination of his party, had the infelicity to write several letters which presented him as opposed to the annexation, though careful to explain that it was not on account of slavery. Of course, this lost him the earnest anti-slavery support of the North, and at the same time put him at a great disadvantage at the South. Again the Whigs showed their incapacity for practical politics. The cloud of the Liberty Party, though not

bigger then than a man's hand upon the political sky, was broadened and darkened into a big enough mass to eclipse the Whig majority in the States of New York and Michigan, and give pluralities to Polk and Dallas. Mr. Greeley's explanation of the causes of this fateful result admits "those Alabama letters" as sufficient—independently of Mr. Polk's duplicity on the Tariff Question, the "Native American" movement, the Plaquemine Frauds in Louisiana, and the failure to send a hundred thousand *Tribunes* daily, and a quarter of a million weekly, to the voters of the land !

Horace Greeley's exertions in this campaign were prodigious. It was no mere partisan service, nor the defence of what he deemed the truths of political and moral science. It was personal devotion to the candidate, which went back to the days of his boyhood. Let him tell the story for himself : "I have admired and trusted many statesmen ; I profoundly loved Henry Clay. . . . I loved him for his generous nature, his gallant bearing, his thrilling eloquence, and his lifelong devotion to what I deemed our country's unity, prosperity, and just renown. Hence, from the day of his nomination, in May, to that of his defeat, in November, I gave every effort, every thought to his election. . . . I gave heart and soul to the canvass. I travelled and spoke much ; I

wrote, I think, an average of three columns of the *Tribune* each secular day ; and I gave the residue of the hours I could save from sleep to watching the canvass, and doing whatever I could to render our side of it effective. Very often I crept to my lodging near the office at 2 to 3 A.M., with my head so heated by fourteen to sixteen hours of incessant reading and writing that I could only win sleep by means of copious effusions from a shower-bath,"—the result of which, while probably saving him from a dangerous fever, was an eruption of myriads of boils, often fifty or sixty at a time, which accompanied him with their torture and unrest through the latter part of the campaign, and for six months afterward.

There was one more supreme effort to be made for his "gallant Harry of the West," and that was for his nomination by the Whig Convention of 1848. But meanwhile Mr. Polk had done the bidding of his Southern masters, and not only by the prestige of his election forced the Annexation measure through a reluctant Congress during the closing days of Tyler's administration, but made it one of his first acts to send a military force to the Rio Grande into a region not in possession of the Texans. Horace Greeley's voice sounded like a Jeremiah's or a Cassandra's throughout this shameful and sorely atoned-for episode in our

national history. "So sure as the universe has a Ruler," he cried, "will every acre of territory we acquire by this war prove to our nation a curse and the source of infinite calamities!"

But it so happened that the little army sent to force a war on Mexico was under command of one Zachary Taylor, whose swift and successful exploits, though less important than those of General Scott, had taken the fancy of the nation and made "Old Zack" a greater hero than "Tippecanoe," or even "the hero of New Orleans." Being a Whig, that desperate party was seized with a new fever of "expediency," and the exultant cry went up that the Democrats had outgeneralled themselves by raising up a man who could handle them as dexterously in the political field as he had handled the Mexican half-breeds in battle.

It was a death-warning, not to the Democrats alone, but to the devoted friends of Henry Clay, who still believed that he should have another chance for the Presidency, and who knew that he represented and could be intrusted with the great principles of the Whig Party, as General Taylor did not and could not. The absurdity and peril of such a nomination were forcibly urged by Mr. Greeley, on the ground of General Taylor's lack both of interest or experience in politics, having never even voted; his slight identification with the Whig Party,

and his uncertain views of such questions as Protection, Internal Improvement, the Currency, and Slavery in the Territories. As to the latter, the presumption was against him, being an extensive slaveholder himself. Besides, Mr. Greeley wanted to try over again the issue on which he believed the Whigs had been cheated of the election in 1844. He considered New York and Pennsylvania sure for the party this time, and the election of a Whig President morally certain.

The Whigs of New York City were almost unanimous for Henry Clay ; it was always his stronghold. But a small clique of able and adroit politicians did all they could for the nomination of the "hero of Buena Vista ;" they had the *Courier and Enquirer* on their side, with its singularly inconsistent motto at its mast-head, "Principles, not Men ;" and they had eloquent speakers like Hugh Maxwell and J. Prescott Hall to address the meetings which they held weekly at Lafayette Hall, in Broadway, near Houston Street. The writer occasionally looked in upon this small and unexciting gathering, which never attracted much attention till the last one, which met by adjournment on the evening of the nomination. Never will he forget the scene which met his eyes on arriving at the spot. An immense stream of men was pouring into the hall, of

which they took possession at an early hour, organized a meeting, and with thunderous unanimity voted down the Convention's choice, and nominated Henry Clay. The "original Taylor men," of course, were careful not to show themselves, and patiently bided their time, knowing that the reaction would come, and doubtless chuckling over the consciousness that the select pioneers and confessors would be the better cared for in the distribution of the spoils, as they were.

Upon the nomination of Taylor, on the fourth ballot, Mr. Greeley left the Convention in disgust, and it was not till about four months after that he consented to affix the ticket to the head of his editorial columns. He did not positively place himself in opposition, but sulked in his tent like a journalistic Achilles. I well remember the night, only a few weeks before the election, on which he was discovered at one of the still select Taylor meetings, which continued to be held at Lafayette Hall. He was called upon the stage, and in a characteristically frank and evidently reluctant speech, announced his intention to support the Whig nominee. In fact, he reminded his audience that from the beginning he had pledged himself to do so, if he saw no other way of defeating General Cass, the regular Democratic candidate. He now saw no

alternative between Cass and Taylor, and was ready to redeem his pledge. The most significant part of his speech was that he laid the greatest stress upon the bearing of the election on the question of freedom in the Territories. The secret of his hesitation had doubtless been that a third ticket had been put in the field upon that very issue, headed by Martin Van Buren and Charles Francis Adams, in addition to the fact that the Whig Convention had been careful to vote down a resolution on that point. But it had now become clear that every Whig vote for this ticket could only go to the election, in General Cass, of one of the most subservient Northern tools of the slave power. Addressing himself to those (and the whole assembly vociferously avowed themselves as such) "to whom the question of extending or restricting slavery outweighed all other considerations," he asked them "what hope they had of keeping slavery out of California and New Mexico with General Cass as President, and a Loco-foco Congress ;" and again, "How would South Carolina and Texas wish you to vote?" He felt no assurance of General Taylor's soundness on this question, but believed him clearly pledged by his letters to interpose no veto to the legislation of Congress ; and he believed that a Whig Congress, which could only be secured by the triumph of the Presi-



dential ticket, would not consent to extend slavery.

This speech decided the question. Greeley with his *Tribune* and Seward in the forum carried the anti-slavery Whigs almost in a body over to Taylor ; and Mr. Van Buren was left with the support mostly of the Free-Soil Democrats, thus drawing almost exclusively from the forces of General Cass. General Taylor was elected by a large plurality ; and with the usual ill-fortune of the Whigs, he had scarcely begun to approve himself, even to Mr. Greeley, as not only "an honest, wise, fearless public servant," but as a stanch Whig, when he "died also,"—and Mr. Fillmore played the Tyler with the Free-Soil Whigs of New York, in whose interests he was nominated for the Vice-Presidency.

In reviewing that election in after years, Mr. Greeley says that the contest had been fought, not on principles, but on candidates ; it was simply the preference by a majority of Zachary Taylor to Lewis Cass. Hence the very House, elected with or under Taylor, was organized to oppose his administration. "The Whigs could not say with Pyrrhus, 'Another such victory, and I am ruined !' This one sufficed to disintegrate and destroy their organization. They were at once triumphant and undone." But much more significant was his subsequent

confession : " When a resolve opposing the Wilmot Proviso was laid on the table at the Convention, . . . I felt that my zeal, my enthusiasm for the Whig cause was also laid there."

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE POLITICIAN : THE FREE-SOIL STRUGGLE.

IT is now time to gather up those strands in Horace Greeley's previous life which determined his making the above declaration, and which brought him on the threshold of "the new era in politics," as he calls it. Among the early recollections which made the most impression on his mind was a fugitive slave-chase. New York had so framed its ordinance of emancipation that certain born slaves should remain such till twenty-eight years old, and one of this class had stepped over the line and was at work in Poultney, whither his master, "with due process and following, came to reclaim and recover the goods." With a unanimous and instinctive impulse the village was instantly swarming on the green; "and the result was a speedy disappearance of the chattel, and the return of the master, disconsolate and niggerless, to the place whence he came." "Our people," adds Horace, "hated injustice and oppression, and acted as if they couldn't help it." His next record of himself on this subject was, that "though a child of seven to

ten years," he "heartily sympathized with the Northern uprising against the admission of Missouri as a slave State, and shared in the disappointment and chagrin so widely felt when that uprising was circumvented and defeated by what was called a compromise." And yet, as respects any further political action for the remaining fourteen or fifteen years (1821-35), we find him sharing the almost universal disposition to ignore the subject, and to treat the handful of agitators with silent contempt, or at least to wink at the usual hootings, occasional rotten-egging, and rare personal violence, which attended their career. He could not withhold from these people, he tells us, a certain measure of sympathy, but was unable to see how their efforts tended to the achievement of their end. "Conservative by instinct and by tradition," he was "disinclined to leave a practical good within reach for an ideal good that was clearly unattainable." Hence he gave the Abolitionists a wide berth, and "for years regarded with complacency the Colonization movement."

We find him going much further than this in an article written for the *New Yorker* in 1834, in the usual philosophical tone of that day. After pronouncing the framers of the Constitution "wise in avoiding all discussion of a subject so delicate and exciting," and in "leaving

each section in the possession of its undoubted right of regulating its own internal government and enjoying its own speculative opinions," he asks: "Why should not this arrangement be satisfactory and perfect?" He "hazards the assertion" that two such distinct races as the whites and blacks of the United States could not possibly live together on terms of political and social equality. He even "ventures to assert" that if the Southern people could only have "the objections to slavery, drawn from a correct and enlightened political economy, once fairly laid before them, they would need no other inducements to impel them to enter upon an immediate and effective course of legislation with a view to the utter extinction of the evil." Here we have a very early illustration of the almost infantile confidence in the reasonableness and placability of the slave power, which no words or acts on their part could long suppress, and which rose at length to an infatuation that led him to wreck his life-work by a suicidal casting of himself away upon their syren reefs.

It will be seen, from our previous narrative of Mr. Greeley's course in the campaign of 1844, that he had been growing in grace on the question of slavery *as a Whig*. Slavery had now become a practical question within the Constitution, by an aggressive movement to

create new slave States out of free soil, or territory not included within the scope of the Constitutional Compromise. The seizure of Texas and the War with Mexico made it evident that instead of an unfortunate victim of circumstances, to be dealt with in peculiar fairness and generosity, the slave power was a political panther, intent not upon national toleration, but upon national control. "When we find the Union on the brink of a most unjust and rapacious war," was now the clear note which Mr. Greeley sounded out upon his *Tribune*, "instigated wholly (as is officially proclaimed) by a determination to uphold and fortify slavery, then we do not see how it can longer be rationally disputed that the North has much, very much, to do with slavery. If we may be drawn in to fight for it, it would be hard indeed that we should not be allowed to talk of it." He never hesitated to pronounce the whole series of events, from the invasion of Texas by Houston and the other alleged "colonists," to the repeal of the Missouri Compromise and the "border ruffian" aggressions, as the "acts of a drama . . . of naked villainy," whose "'being's end and aim' were the aggrandizement of the Slave Power."

Another event that opened his eyes and fired his heart was the "martyrdom" of the Rev. Elijah P. Lovejoy, the publisher of an anti-

slavery religious paper at Alton, Ill. After having two printing-presses destroyed by the mob, this undaunted and perhaps unduly obstinate man, with a few friends, was defending his third press, just received, when he was shot dead by one of his assailants. The fact that this outrage occurred in a free State, and that no legal justice was ever meted out to the murderers, or restitution made to the family for their loss of property, was what most awakened Mr. Greeley and the slumbering anti-slavery sentiment of the North; and the additional fact, that the whole tone of the messages of President Jackson, Governor Marcy, and other officials was to set forth this fate of Lovejoy as his just deserts, compelled him to realize that the battle must be first fought in the North.

And yet he clung to the Whig Party, though he felt its timbers parting beneath his feet. He saw that the policy of the Taylor Administration was disposed to secure new territory to freedom, but only by covert and compromise measures,—in fact, to do little more than to tide over the breakers ahead during its own brief term. He took the stump in Vermont for the Whigs, who were threatened with defeat by a coalition of the Democrats with the Abolitionists on an unequivocally Free-Soil platform. He gave a partial and qualified support to Mr. Clay's compromise measure. He beheld the great pillar



of Whiggery, Mr. Webster, retracing his steps and eating his own words in trembling haste before a Southern Whig vote, which had already sunk to twenty-nine members of the House out of sixty-two, that were returned in the elections which followed General Taylor's election by a majority of the South.

Horace Greeley was thus, by his own confession, numbered with the moderates during the great struggle and debate wherein the "Adjustment" was assailed by zealous anti-slavery men like Hale, Chase, and Seward, on the one hand, and by zealous, aggressive pro-slavery men like Calhoun, Jeff. Davis, Mason, and Butler, on the other. The measure, however, had been so altered in the interests of slavery, that it would probably have failed had it not been for the sudden death of President Taylor, and the accession of Millard Fillmore, who had hastened to follow the lead of Daniel Webster. The measure, which was finally passed, under the vain delusion that it would hush the gathering storm, with its fugitive-slave law and the exposing of territory to slaveholding aggression, proved to be a direful sowing of dragon's teeth.

In the election of 1852 Horace Greeley engaged in the forlorn hope of electing General Scott as the candidate of the Whig Party, whose nomination he had been effective in se-

curing as against Fillmore and Webster, though he emphatically repudiated the "doughface" platform, and ran his candidates on a platform of his own. This Greeley platform, while conceding non-interference by Congress with slavery in the slave States, opposed the legalization of slavery in any national territory, or the acquisition of any foreign territory wherein slavery already existed ; also the hunting of fugitive slaves in free States ; together with an inflexible testimony that human slavery is morally wrong, and ought to be speedily terminated. Another, and the foremost "plank" in this platform took strong protective ground on the Tariff Question. This doctrine was really the last strand which held him to the Whig Party ; he gives the soundness of Scott and Graham on this issue, together with his belief that they could be elected, as the only reasons for his support of them. We may here simply mention the remaining planks : Liberal appropriations by the Federal Government for improvement of rivers and harbors ; transcontinental railroads and other great enterprises calculated to strengthen the Union and contribute to the national defence ; one Presidential term ; a reform in the system of payment and mileage in Congress ; "more regard for, and less cant about, State Rights." His plank on "Foreign Policy" was a rather unintelli-

gible see-saw, composed of the Golden Rule and a "firm front to tyrants, a prompt rebuke to every outrage on the law of nations ;" "no evasion of duties or shuffling of responsibilities, . . . and a generous, active sympathy with the victims of tyranny and usurpation."

General Scott's stupendous vanity made him confident of triumph to the very night of election, but we doubt whether even Mr. Greeley was able to whistle loud enough through the *Tribune* to keep his own or his readers' courage up. With few exceptions, at least, it was felt that the Whig Party was dead and gone. Political shades still continued for many years to flit across the scene, whispering ghostily that they were "old-line Whigs." Endeavors were made to reconstruct out of its *débris* a party, figure-headed by Millard Fillmore, which should dodge the slavery question by diverting the issue to that of "Americanism" (or "Know-nothingism")—ultimately to be sold out to, or absorbed into, the Democratic. The dam had broken, and the great Whig reservoir was swelling the resistless stream of tendency which was sweeping all before it toward the engulfing chasm of civil war. Even the old generation of leaders and statesmen passed away at this time. Henry Clay died June 24th, 1852, and Daniel Webster on October 24th. Just before the death of the former,

Mr. Greeley had the great but sad satisfaction of a half hour's free and friendly conversation, in his sick-room at Washington, with the chief-tain whom he had so loved and gallantly fought for. Though in the last stages of disease and debility, "his mind was unclouded and brilliant as ever; and, though all personal ambition had long been banished, his interest in the events and impulses of the day was nowise diminished." Mr. Greeley carried away the impression that "Mr. Clay regretted that more care had not been taken to divest the fugitive-slave law of features needlessly repulsive to Northern sentiment."

Horace Greeley had been the most independent of Whigs. He was now a free man, as respected party. He never again was fairly harnessed to party shafts, nor belonged to anything but a Greeley party, which wiggled strangely thereafter from side to side of the road.

The "new era in politics" which was now opening before him was briefly this. As we are not writing history, but biography, we present the situation as seen through his eyes. Alongside of the mushroom growth of the Know-nothing party, sprang up the most rapid and effective political movement in American history. The man, whose personality and po-

litical ambitions were the occasion of this great revolution, was Stephen A. Douglas, a Vermonter by birth and a Democratic Senator from Illinois at the time of President Pierce's election, and Chairman of the Committee on Territories. His course all along had been that of an extreme partisan and a subservient tool of the slave power. Taking advantage of his position, in the short session of 1852-53 he introduced a bill to organize the Territory of Nebraska. It was opposed by the pro-slavery leaders, led by Senator Atchison, of Missouri, since this was a part of the territory conceded and consecrated to free labor by the Missouri Compromise of 1820. In the succeeding session (1853-54) Mr. Douglas again brought up his bill, seeking to obviate the objection of the slaveholders by suggesting that the Missouri Compromise had been annulled in this respect by the Compromise of 1850. The South, however, was not content with an irresponsible interpretation, and introduced a bill that the interdiction of slave-labor be expressly repealed. Mr. Douglas acquiesced, and added to his bill what he called its "true intent and meaning"—namely, "neither to legislate slavery into the Territory in question, nor to exclude it therefrom," but to leave the matter to the people thereof for themselves. As thus amended or defined (and with the alteration that an addi-

tional territory, to be called Kansas, lying directly west of Missouri, should be carved out of the original Nebraska), the bill passed the Senate by 35 to 13 votes, and the House by 113 to 100, and was signed by President Pierce.

Thereupon began the struggle for the possession of this debatable ground between the Northern settlers and the emissaries of slavery ; and, even earlier, the arousing of the North to resist the whole scheme, and reopening of the question. Into this work of arousing and of resisting, Horace Greeley cast himself without reserve, and with all the force which he and his great journal could exert. His eyes were now fully open to the impossibility of any compromise with the South which could insure the freedom of the Territories, much less the confinement of slavery to its present limits,—in fact, which did not amount to a partnership in the rights and extension of slaveholding as of any other property ; and his mission was now to open the eyes of his countrymen. It was a work which *did itself*, or which “ our friends, the enemy,” accomplished more effectually than ourselves. “ The passage of the Nebraska Bill,” says Mr. Greeley, “ was a death-blow to Northern quietism and complacency, mistakingly deeming themselves conservatism. To all who had fondly dreamed, or blindly hoped, that the slavery question would some-



how settle itself, it cried, "Sleep no more!" in thunder tones that would not die unheeded. Every new surrender on the part of the North was seen to provoke a new exaction in the name of the South. Systematic, determined resistance was now recognized as imperative duty. That resistance could only be rendered effective through a distinct, compact political organization. That organization was therefore resolved on, spontaneously and simultaneously, by a million Northern firesides. It was earliest effected in the West, but had pervaded nearly every free State before the close of 1854, and had assumed almost everywhere a common designation,—that of the Republican Party."

Mr. Greeley was a member of the first Republican or "anti-Nebraska" State Convention, in the fall of 1854, at Saratoga Springs. It was thought best to postpone nominations, and the result was an adoption of the Prohibition and Whig ticket, headed by Myron H. Clark and Henry J. Raymond, for Governor and Lieutenant-Governor. By means of the running of two Democratic tickets, called the "soft" and the "hard," on account of their tendencies on the slavery question, and the running of an American ticket, the new party succeeded in electing its candidates and the Legislature, a majority of which had been secretly secured for the return of William H.



Seward to the United States Senate. It was at this time that Mr. Greeley took occasion to write his private letter to Mr. Seward, which six years afterward was made public with such sensational results, and of which we shall have more to say anon.

The great national battle opened with the Thirty-fourth Congress on the question of organization. Instinctively feeling that this session would be of momentous interest and results, Horace Greeley resolved to be on the spot to watch, report, and take a hand, in the imbroglio as long as his associates in the *Tribune* deemed his presence there more important than in New York. It was at this time that the recently published letters to his managing editor, Mr. Dana, were written. They strikingly illustrate the intentness with which he watched Congress with one eye and the columns of the *Tribune* with the other, and his almost frantic solicitude at the effect of every unguarded word in the latter upon the objects for which he was doing such valuable service in the former. In fact, the heart of this heavy-laden man is laid here before us, with all its weakness and its patient or passionate strength, so that our hearts go out toward him with a pity which does not prevent our realizing the greatness of a Samsonian self-devotion, and of prodigious labors.

He took his seat at the reporters' desk on December 3d, 1855, and remained at his post for several weeks. The election of Speaker was to be the key-note of the whole character and course of the Congress. The Republicans and the Americans had a majority ; but the complications of the latter with the Southern questions and their affiliations with the South, prevented their working together against the Southerners,—who, in turn, were divided between the candidate of the Democratic caucus, and a couple of " Whigs " who were favored by the " Know-nothings." The Republicans and the anti-Nebraska Americans held no caucus, but scattered their votes between Lewis D. Campbell of Ohio, N. P. Banks of Massachusetts, Mr. Pennington of New Jersey, and several others. At the close of the week Mr. Campbell withdrew, and Mr. Banks's vote steadily rose to 107 on the thirty-seventh ballot, lacking only six of a majority, and remained at about that point till January 21st, when Mr. Albert Rust of Arkansas (afterward a Rebel Brigadier) proposed that the friends of the four leading candidates be requested to withdraw their names. Mr. Fuller (supported by pro-slavery Whigs and Americans) and Mr. Pennington immediately gave notice that they were no longer candidates, but there was no disposition on the part of Mr. Richardson, the

regular Democratic nominee, or of Mr. Banks, to follow suit ; and Mr. Rust's proposition, after lying open for two or three days, was tabled. In the mean time, Mr. Greeley had expressed himself concerning it, in his correspondence with the *Tribune*, in a highly indignant manner, as at a "humiliating" and "discreditable proposition"—an attempt, on the part of two hostile minorities—to ensnare Mr. Banks to decline. As Banks had repeatedly offered to withdraw at the request of his supporters, and had been upheld by them with unwavering steadiness, and as he had, moreover, offered to abide by the result of a plurality election, Mr. Greeley pronounced the proposal of Rust an "indignity."

On the day when this *Tribune* was received at Washington, Mr. Greeley, after the adjournment, was proceeding down from the Capitol with two gentlemen, when a stranger requested a word with him. He stopped, and his companions passed on. He describes the man as a stranger to him, "in the prime of life, six feet high, and weighing over two hundred." After asking, "Is your name Greeley?" and receiving an affirmative reply, the man asked, "Are you a non-combatant?" To which Greeley answered, "That is according to circumstances." So little did Mr. Greeley take the intimation of the last question, that he still held his hands in his great-coat pockets, and was

thus utterly helpless against several blows on the right side of his head, which temporarily stunned and sent him staggering against the fence of the Capitol grounds. On rallying, he demanded, "Who is this man?" but received no reply immediately, except from the ruffian, who said with an oath, "You'll know me soon enough!" and turned on his heel and went down the street. After he had gone his name was announced as Albert C. Rust, of Arkansas. Mr. Greeley, recovering his consciousness, proceeded on his way, attended by two friends, who dropped behind at Four-and-a-half Street to speak to acquaintances. Near his hotel, the National, his assailant, who was in the midst of a throng of friends, and probably awaiting him, turned short upon him and said, "Do you know me now?" to which he answered, "Yes, you are Rust of Arkansas." The latter said something about what he would do if Greeley was a combatant, whereupon Greeley dauntlessly replied that he claimed no exemption on that account. Rust then struck him with a heavy cane, that was broken by the arm which he raised to protect himself. His arm was badly swelled by the blow, as his head was by the previous assault; but he neither fell nor recoiled, but tried to close with his assailant, who was endeavoring to repeat his stroke, when several persons interposed, and the bully

“whirled away” again. “I did not strike him at all,” writes Mr. Greeley in the cool way he had under real or extreme provocations, “nor lay a finger on him ; but it certainly would have been a pleasure to me had I been able to perform the public duty of knocking him down. I cannot mistake the movement of his hand on the avenue, and am sure it must have been toward a pistol in his belt.”

Mr. Greeley was confined to his room for several days, but was able to continue his editorial work. It was the first time he had ever been seriously assaulted in all his life of plain-speaking and denunciation ; but it was not wholly unexpected, for “I came here,” he wrote, “with a clear understanding that it was about an even chance whether I should or should not be allowed to go home alive. . . . But I shall stay here just so long as I think proper, using great plainness of speech, but endeavoring to treat all men justly and faithfully. . . . I shall carry no weapons and engage in no brawls ; but if ruffians waylay and assail me, I certainly shall not run, and, so far as able, I shall defend myself. . . . If Rust’s assaults were intended to convince me that his proposition was fair and manly, they certainly failed to subserve their purpose.” Horace Greeley’s moral courage was never questioned, but some have endeavored to draw a fine distinction be-

tween this and a lack of physical courage ; but neither in the above incident, nor in his calm indifference during the night of the expected sack of the *Tribune* office by the "Bloody Sixth" mob, nor in his intrepid conduct and self-exposure during the "Draft Riots" in 1863, do we find the slightest trace of cowardice of any kind, especially when we remember that this man never carried weapons, offensive or defensive.

The reason why this assault created a less wide and lasting sensation than that upon Charles Sumner, which occurred only a few weeks later, was partly because Mr. Greeley's injuries were of transient duration, and partly because his usual disinclination to bring suit was increased by the small prospect of a verdict from a Washington jury ; as to a criminal suit, he would not himself be even suspected of instigating that, and, of course, the Washington authorities of that day would not initiate proceedings against a Southern member of Congress. He indulged the belief that by his treatment of Rust he had made him somewhat ashamed of his conduct.

The contest for Speaker kept on till February 2d (nine weeks), when a motion was offered by a Democrat, Mr. Samuel A. Smith of Tennessee, that the House proceed to elect a Speaker *viva voce*, and that, after the calling of

the roll three times without a majority for any one, the roll should be again called, and the member who should receive the largest number of votes should be declared elected. This was adopted by a vote of 113 to 104, seven tired Democrats voting with the majority, whereupon Mr. Banks received, on the one hundred and thirty-third ballot, 103 votes, to 100 for William Aikin of South Carolina, and eleven scattering "Whig" and "Know-nothing" votes.

This long struggle has been pronounced "memorable" by Mr. Greeley, "as the very first in our national history wherein Northern resistance to slavery extension ever won in a fair, stand-up contest, without compromise or equivocation. . . . And there were not seventy-five decided Republicans in the House of 234 members in which it was achieved. . . . The long contest had proved the "American" organization a mist, a fog-bank, an illusion; and the new-born Republican Party, consolidated and united by this struggle, mustered heartily and formidably at its first Convention, which assembled at Pittsburgh, Pa., on the 22d of that month."



## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE POLITICIAN : WITH THE REPUBLICAN PARTY.

THAT Convention nominated Colonel John C. Fremont for President, with the entire concurrence of Mr. Greeley, who thought that the nomination of so adventurous and heroic a "pioneer" would be popular, especially with young men. He opposed at the same time the policy of naming Judge McLean of Ohio, or any others who were urged on the ground of their being able to draw a large proportion of the "American" vote. Previously to this, the Democrats had made a singularly strong nomination in James Buchanan, who had escaped any identification with the Nebraska Bill by being absent as Envoy to Great Britain during Pierce's administration, and who was expected to run well in Pennsylvania, which was regarded as the pivot of the contest. The "Americans" had also nominated Millard Fillmore. But Fillmore could not possibly be accepted by the Republicans, nor could his party be induced to run "combined" tickets in the election. After a gallant but hopeless fight by

the Republicans, Mr. Buchanan was elected by a majority of electoral votes, and a plurality of nearly three hundred thousand less than the aggregated vote of his competitors. In his very inaugural, Buchanan showed his complete ownership by the slave power, foreshadowing the "Dred Scott" decision, which denied the right of Congress to prohibit slaveholding in the Territories.

Meanwhile, the contest in Kansas was fighting itself out. The genuine colonists were almost entirely in favor of free labor ; but there were special colonies sent from the Free States (particularly through the agency of the Hon. Eli Thayer) for the purpose of securing that result, and there entered bands of armed Missourians, especially at election time, to seize the political power and create a reign of terror. Not being able to so intimidate the sturdy settlers, these latter elected a Convention in 1857, and framed a pro-slavery constitution known as the "Le-compton" Constitution, from the place of its birth. There were then two nominal governments in the Territory. The President, from fear of breaking with his party, was forced into endorsing this scheme of force and fraud. But Stephen A. Douglas now saw that he could go no further without alienating the great bulk of his party in the North, and destroying all hope of further political advancement. He

had, moreover, so committed himself to "popular sovereignty" by his Kansas-Nebraska Bill, that he knew he would be despised of all men if he now advocated anything but a genuine decision by the people. The "Little Giant" was able, in a strongly pro-slavery and Democratic House, to indirectly defeat the Leecompton Constitution by a measure allowing the people to vote to reject it, which they did by an overwhelming majority.

When Mr. Douglas came up for re-election at the close of this Congress, Mr. Greeley urged the Republicans of Illinois to accept him as their candidate, and insure his return for a third senatorial term. What would have been the changed result of this course in the subsequent history of our country, it is not easy to conjecture, though Mr. Greeley, as late as 1868, still "abode" in the conviction that it would have been wiser. Here may be noted the first of those conspicuous freaks of political judgment which culminated in the final and tragic scene of his career. The Republicans of Illinois, probably knowing Stephen Arnold Douglas better than the editor of the New York *Tribune*, and holding plain and honest Abraham Lincoln nearest to their hearts, of all men, nominated the latter, and sent him over the State debating with Douglas before the thousands of the people, the issues which lay before

the country. The tournament was followed by the whole land with eager interest, and, though Douglas was elected Senator by a small legislative majority, a general attention was attracted to Lincoln as the powerful and popular champion of the Free-Soil cause.

The Republican Convention of 1860 turned upon the question of Seward and not Seward. The Senator of New York had so grown upon the people as a leader in the forum and in council, that a large plurality of the delegates were instructed to vote in his favor. Quite a number who had once, in opposition to Mr. Greeley's ardent electioneering in his behalf, pronounced his nomination unadvisable, were now urging him upon the Convention. How much Greeley's break with Seward had to do with his present attitude of antagonism and change of opinion as to "the Governor's" availability, we may not conjecture. We only know that he became a delegate through a commission from Oregon, was indefatigable in his efforts to defeat the nomination of Seward, visiting and addressing various delegations with this object. He always afterward deprecated the credit of having done as much toward the result as was popularly supposed. His own candidate was Edward Bates of Missouri. The uppermost thought in the minds of the dele-

gates, who did not come there expressly to obtain Seward's nomination, was to ascertain which of the other candidates could best unite the opposition. This consolidation was only partially accomplished before the balloting—Seward having 173½, Lincoln 102, Simon Cameron 50½, Chase 49, Bates 48, and Dayton, McLean, and Collamer each a few. But by the third ballot three of these had been withdrawn and the votes of others greatly reduced, while Mr. Seward's had only grown to 180. The votes had gone to Lincoln, who received 231½, only four or five less than a majority, whereupon the usual stampede began, and votes were transferred to Lincoln, till he had 354 out of 466. The nomination was made unanimous, though we have reason to believe that Mr. Greeley voted for Bates up to this time, and was never in his heart content with the result. There was very apparent in this obstinate choice, the idea, which was already taking such an almost morbid hold upon him, of the winning over of a Southern constituency to the new party by a selection "more far-sighted, more courageous, and more magnanimous." He shrank from the appeal to stones, and thought that the day of throwing grass had not yet passed by.

The canvass of the Convention by Mr. Seward's friends was undoubtedly prejudicial

to his cause. It was not a time for clap-trap or of intimidation ; and the appearance of "gangs" from New York, processions, drum-beating, and banner-flying was calculated only to prejudice the earnest men of that steel-toned time ; and it was unnecessary in the case of a man whose record and services had been such as William H. Seward's. We have had it distinctly stated to us by delegates and visitors at Chicago, that it was not so much Mr. Seward who was defeated as it was the men who lobbied and bullied and hurrahed for him, and who, it was feared, would represent him in the Government. The effect of his disappointment was very bitter to the distinguished candidate, who looked upon this as his "last chance" for the Presidency, and regarded himself as having a superior claim upon the party above all others.

It is no wonder, then, that Mr. Henry J. Raymond should have written from the ex-Governor's house at Auburn, on his way home, a letter to his paper, the *New York Times*, in which he attributed the result entirely to Mr. Greeley's influence and efforts, and at the same time imputed those efforts to a "personal hatred, secretly cherished for years," and "the long-hoarded revenge of a disappointed office-seeker ;" and again, attributed the efficacy of these efforts to "the forbearance" of those

who knew that Greeley had written a letter in November, 1854, "repudiating all further political friendship" for Seward, and "menacing him with his hostility whenever it could be made most effective, for the avowed reason that Governor Seward had never aided or advised his elevation to office," etc. Mr. Raymond, notwithstanding his crediting of the defeat to Mr. Greeley, admits that "the tremendous applause" which greeted the first mention of Lincoln's name was an indication of extraordinary enthusiasm and unanimity, and declares that "the final selection of Lincoln was a matter of accident." His whole tone is one of intense bitterness and sarcasm, and arraigns the editor of the *Tribune* for unjustifiable inconsistency with his own past record, and for the most malignant and contemptible of motives.

Mr. Greeley made an immediate demand for the letter referred to, for publication in his paper. We shall have another opportunity of adducing the substance of this letter under another chapter of this book. In commenting upon it, he asseverates what we think few will nowadays doubt: "If ever in my life I discharged a public duty in utter disregard of personal considerations, I did so at Chicago last month. I was no longer a devotee of Governor Seward, but I was equally



independent of all others ; and if I had been swayed by feeling alone, I should, for many reasons, have preferred him to any of his competitors. . . . But I did not, and do not, believe it advisable that he should be the Republican candidate for President ; and . . . each subsequent day's developments have tended to strengthen my confidence that what I did was not only well meant, but well done."

Subsequent developments, we may add, have abundantly accounted for Mr. Greeley's course in the Chicago Convention, and in all his remaining political life, upon the broader basis of a (perhaps) mistaken policy toward the South, without imputing to him the ignominious motive of personal revenge.

The election of the Chicago candidate, whoever he might be, was a foregone conclusion. The Democratic Convention at Charleston had broken up in a quarrel by the withdrawal of a majority of the delegates from Slave States, who could not accept the "Squatter Sovereignty" platform adopted,—the bolters nominating Vice-President John C. Breckinridge for President. The remainder or regular Convention nominated Stephen A. Douglas. John Bell of Tennessee and Edward Everett had also been put in nomination by the

“ American,” or (as it was now called) “ The Constitutional Union” party, an indefinite movement calculated to draw votes from the Democrats rather than the Republicans. There can be no question now that the Southern leaders of the Breckinridge party meant to secure a Republican victory, as a pretext for, and a step forward in the line of, disunion. The result was that Lincoln carried 180 electoral votes to 123 for all others, receiving all from the free States, except 4 in New Jersey, which went to Douglas. The popular vote gave Lincoln 1,857,610, Douglas 1,291,574, Breckinridge 850,082, and Bell 646,121. This result was received with special rejoicings in South Carolina.

On the other hand, the North became alarmed by a sudden realization of a possible secession; and the compromise and cringing were revived. The Crittenden Compromise—proposing to divide up forever the Territories all the way to the Pacific, by the line of 36 degrees and 30 minutes, between slavery and freedom—Mr. Greeley thinks would have carried the popular vote of the North. His own position now became more and more singular and speculative. He stood firm in his determination to yield not a jot to slavery extension, as a worse evil than disunion, inasmuch as the one was “ guilt,” and the other “ calamity.”

But, estimating the real secession sentiment to be limited to the Breckinridge vote, he had an optimistic view that the remainder of the Southern people were open to reason, and would shrink from a dissolution of the Union as the worse evil. His policy, therefore, was to boldly confront the comparatively small body of extremists with an attitude like this : We are tired and impatient of your threats of disunion ; it is time to end it ; we want you distinctly to understand that " the Union was no boon conferred on the North by the South, but a *voluntary* partnership, at least as advantageous to the latter as to the former," and " that the North can do without the South quite as well as the South could do without the North."

While the great leaders of the Northern sentiment were saying to the South : The Union cannot be dissolved by force, and whoever attempts it will rue the day ; behave yourselves, and obey the laws,—Horace Greeley took this stand : " You are not the Southern people, nor even a majority of the Southern whites, but an unscrupulous and desperate minority who have overawed, gagged, and paralyzed the majority. Secure us a fair opportunity to state our side of the case, and to argue the points at issue before your people, and we will abide their decision." And then he adds these un-

fortunate words (remember that this was before the war, and even before the new Administration had been inaugurated): "We disclaim a union of force,—a union held together by bayonets. . . . If your people decide that they choose to break away from us, we will interpose no obstacle to their peaceful withdrawal from the Union."

The above he gives as what he "said in substance." Here is what he said in actuality and cold type: "The dissolution of the Union would not be the dreadful affair he [a correspondent] represents it. It would be a very absurd act on the part of the seceding party, and would work great inconvenience and embarrassment, especially to the people of the great Mississippi Valley. In time, however, matters would accommodate themselves to the new political arrangements, and we should grow as many bushels of corn to the acre, and get as many yards of cloth from a hundred pounds of wool as we now do. The Union is an excellent thing—quite too advantageous to be broken up in an age so utilitarian as this; but it is possible to exaggerate even *its* blessings." It was a strange perversion of judgment which led him to suppose that this kind of talk would tend to discourage disunion. And have we not here a glimpse of another of Mr. Greeley's weaknesses, a tendency to utilitarian estimates

of ethical and æsthetic subjects? It would seem as if in farming he was a theorist, while in the realm of ideas he was too apt to look to crops of corn and pounds of wool.

He was right in believing that the South was not *yet* for secession ; but this was simply because the crucial hour, when the secrets of all men's hearts were to be revealed, had not come. He attributed the final union of the South in disunion, to the bombardment of Sumter, and quotes ex-Senator Clemens of Alabama as testifying to having overheard some of the Confederate leaders, soon after the ordinance of secession was passed, discussing the propriety of firing on that fortress, and saying to one another : "*It MUST be done ; delay two months, and Alabama stays in the Union ; you must sprinkle blood in the faces of the people.*" But Greeley's error was in not taking just this contingency into account as sure to be the course of those desperate "Rebs," and also in failing to fathom the latent depth of the State Rights and State loyalty principle to which their violent measures would appeal. This singular misconception of the nature of the Union, and still more singular illusion as to the Southern people, furnish the sufficient clew to the mysteries and mistakes of his subsequent career.

Many of us who were then readers of the

*Tribune* can well remember the snock which such opinions, and the following, gave us, and possibly the temporary warping of our own views of the indissolubility of the Union, and of the real nature of the situation confronting us,—so much easier is it to judge of a matter by a look-back than by a forecast: “If seven or eight contiguous States shall present themselves authentically at Washington, saying, ‘We hate the Federal Union, we have withdrawn from it; we give you the choice between acquiescing in our secession and arranging amicably all incidental questions on the one hand, and attempting to subdue us on the other,’ we could not stand up for coercion, for subjugation, for we do not think it just. . . . While we deny the right of slaveholders to hold slaves against the will of the latter, we cannot see how twenty millions can rightfully hold ten or even five in a detested union with them by military force. . . . We could not take the other side without coming in direct conflict with those rights of man which we hold paramount to all political arrangements, however convenient and advantageous.” These words were printed as early as December 17th, 1860; and a week afterward these: “Let the cotton States, or any six or more States, say unequivocally, ‘We want to get out of the Union,’ and propose to effect their end peaceably and in-



offensively, and we will do our best to help them out ; not that we want them to go, but that we loathe the idea of compelling them to stay. All we ask is that they exercise a reasonable patience, so as to give time for effecting their end without bloodshed."

Let us bear in mind, while reading such manifestoes, as well as in Horace Greeley's whole career, that there lay at the basis of his moral and mental make-up (probably unconscious to himself) two great principles, or sentiments,—an almost fanatical passion for liberty to all and in all things, and a morbid shrinking from the employment of physical force, and especially bloodshed, even toward criminals convicted of murder.

Yet with characteristic inconsistency we find him saying at the same date as the language just quoted: "I deny to one State, or to a dozen different States, the right to dissolve this Union. It can only be legally dissolved as it was formed—by the free consent of all the parties concerned. . . . It is anarchy even to admit the right of secession. It is to degrade our Union into a mere alliance, and insure its speedy ruin." It is difficult to understand that such diverse teachings could proceed from a perfectly sound condition of brain. It certainly indicates, if not a mental confusion, a tendency for the mind, in the face of a great



crisis, to be thrown into an indecisive and speculative train, rather than to be braced for the clear apprehension of the situation, and a corresponding promptness and firmness of action.

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE POLITICIAN : THE CIVIL WAR.

THE war was really going on in the South, even before Mr. Lincoln's inauguration. Every fortress, arsenal, and armory of the Federal Government, except three, had been handed over without resistance to the conspirators ; and the greater part of our small army, with all its equipments and stores, had been surrendered by General Twiggs, who would seem to have been purposely assigned by the Secretary of War to the Southwestern frontier for that very purpose. But somehow the actual existence of armed rebellion was not realized by the people of the North till the tidings came like a thunder-clap that Fort Sumter had been fired upon, and had surrendered on the 12th and 13th of April. The immediate result of this, as had been anticipated, was the hurrying of States which Mr. Greeley had hoped to save by reasoning (such as Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and others) into rebellion and affiliation with the original seven.

We need not recite the rapid strides of the Rebellion,—the assaults upon our troops pass-

ing through Baltimore by pro-slavery mobs ; the abandonment of Harper's Ferry Arsenal and of Norfolk Navy-Yard under fire ; the menacing of St. Louis by a Confederate camp ; the expectation of winning " Maryland, my Maryland " to the disunion cause ; the closing of the South to Northern travel and commerce. Nor need we repeat President Lincoln's call to arms, and summons of the new Congress to meet on July 4th, and the response of the War Governors of the free States with their quotas of troops to protect the capital and property of the Union.

Just here begins the fire of criticisms, as constant as they were inconsistent, with which Horace Greeley's *Tribune* kept up a side bombardment of the Government. He first censured the President for calling out 75,000 men instead of 1,000,000. The second was to denounce the " weakness, irresolution, hesitation, delay," in its councils, and the scattering of its recruits, " demoralized by weeks of idleness and dissipation," on separate lines, till the enemy had collected all his forces against a single corps of ours at Bull Run, defeating and stampeding it.

At the same time, Mr. Greeley could not deny that the " Forward to Richmond ! " impulse had been stimulated by his paper, though it " was not in accordance with the views and

advice which he had profusely and almost daily proffered !” It was the cause of profound and prolonged distress to him, and even of an attack of brain-fever, which for weeks rendered him prostrate and almost unconscious. He insisted, however, upon exculpating himself from any responsibility for a movement such as this had been, and still declared his belief that a hundred thousand men, if earlier started, might have been in the rebel capital on or before July 20th (the date of the battle of Bull Run).

The disaster, and the disposition of the country to make a scapegoat of him for voicing the popular impatience and ignorance, made him thereafter less peremptory in his advice, though not more diffident. He found it quite impossible to carry out his pledge to “bar all criticism in these columns on army movements, past or future.” Even in saying this, he took pains to emphasize anew his leading maxim and criticism : “I think a government that begins the work of putting down a rebellion by forming ‘camps of instruction’ ” (note the inconsistency of this with his censure of the Administration for not comprehending the proportions and premonitions of the Rebellion), “or anything of that sort, is likely to make a long job of it. . . . I beg it to be understood once for all, that if less than half the Union armies are hurled against all the rebel forces that could

be concentrated (more than double their number), on ground strongly fortified by the traitors, the *Tribune* does not approve and should not be held responsible for such madness. . . . Say what you will of the past, but remember this for the future."

It is difficult to be patient with such inconsistent criticism on the part of a great organ of public opinion, so unfair and embarrassing to an Administration charged with the greatest military work of modern times without preparation or experience ; but it must be considered with regard to the source from which it came,—a man whose nature and whose occupation had combined to endue him with a sense of his own infallibility, and his duty to pronounce instantaneous judgment on all the world's affairs between midnight and dawn, and a man of intensity of moral and nervous temperament, which could not brook the least delay or difference in the doing of his will. Yet we presume that no one would venture now to impugn his singleness and integrity of motive in all his long and inconsiderate opposition to the Administration.

His next assumption of special wisdom and special responsibility appeared in August, 1862, after General McClellan's retreat from the Peninsula, in the form of a demand (styled "The Prayer of Twenty Millions") that the

President should proclaim liberty to the slaves under the Confiscation Act. Mr. Lincoln thought best to reply in the same public manner, and his letter is one of those gems of clear, concise, and apothegmatic style which have given him a place beside Patrick Henry and Daniel Webster among our public men. He begins by waiving any attempt to contravert, or to defend himself against, any erroneous assumptions and inferences or any impatient and dictatorial tone which it might contain, "in deference to an old friend whose heart I have always found to be right." He then proclaims his "paramount object to save the Union, and *not* either to save or destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it ; if I could do it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it ; and if I could do it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that. What I do about slavery and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps save this Union ; and what I forbear, I forbear because I do not believe it would help to save the Union. I shall do *less* whenever I shall believe what I am doing hurts the cause ; and I shall do *more* whenever I shall believe doing more will help the cause. I shall try to correct errors when shown to be errors, and I shall adopt new views so fast as they shall appear to be true views. I have here stated my

purpose, according to my view of *official* duty ; and I intend no modification of my *personal* wish that all men everywhere should be free."

Mr. Greeley's reply consisted in reasserting his opinion that the rebels had actually and legally forfeited all property rights (which his correspondent recognized as well as himself), summarizing conspicuous instances of weak and inconsistent action, such as the modification of Fremont's proclamation, and the reluctant and even outrageous treatment by the soldiers of fugitives who had fled for shelter within our lines ; and pointing to the policy of doing just that which the enemies of the cause, North and South, did not want us to do.

As we have intimated, the weakness, if not the impertinence, of Mr. Greeley was in not apprehending all these generalities of policy, and in urging the President to take this extreme measure, when (of all times) our cause looked its darkest, and we were cowering under a crushing defeat and disappointment. How much wiser did our Fabius show himself to be, in waiting a month longer for the great victory of Antietam to give his Proclamation of Emancipation the prestige of power rather than the tone of a shriek of despair !

It was only a few days after this decree went into effect (January 22d, 1863) that we find the *Tribune* apparently dissatisfied with the execu-



tion of its great gun, which it had confidently expected to dash the Confederacy in pieces by its mere reverberation, and talking in this wise : " If three months more of earnest fighting shall not serve to make a serious impression upon the rebels ; if the end of that term shall find us no further advanced than its beginning, . . . let us bow to our destiny, and make the best attainable peace." About this time also (December, 1862), knowing their man, the enemy began to entice him through their agents to endeavors for peace, with a view to using these for bolstering up the courage of their followers. But this time, however anxious to contribute to the end, he was not to be led into a snare as to the means. His letter to Mr. W. C. (Colorado) Jewett, of Washington, gave distinct notice that the negotiations must not be between unofficial persons, but " between the Government of the United States and the accredited authorities of the Confederates ;" that the Confederates must take the initiative ; and that any arbitration proposed must exclude Great Britain, France, and Louis Napoleon, and must be " a power which has evinced no partiality or unfriendliness to either party." " I can consider no man a friend of the Union," were his concluding words, " who makes a parade of peace propositions, or peace agita-

tion, prior to such action." The result was, of course, the discovery once more by Mr. Greeley, "after weeks of earnest pursuit of some endurable peace proposition from the rebels, without having come in sight of any rebel proposition at all," "that there never was any conciliatory project authorized by the rebel chiefs." Is there not something to be more compassionated than censured in the almost infantile innocence and incorrigible fatuity of such a chase of rainbows as this, and his whole career to the end?

Again, in July, 1864, we find Horace Greeley in correspondence with Jewett and others, at Niagara Falls, who seemed to have given him an impression, and induced him to give the President an impression, that they were empowered to negotiate for peace. Among the reasons impelling Mr. Greeley to rush with anxious eagerness into the conference is this characteristic one,—“the fearful expensiveness of the war” and that to protract it was to “involve all parties in bankruptcy and ruin.” By persistent endeavor he obtained a roving commission from the President to this effect: “If you can find any person, anywhere, professing to have any proposition from Jefferson Davis, in writing, for peace, embracing the restoration of the Union and abandonment of slavery, whatever else it embraces, say to him that he may come

to me with you, and that if he really brings any such proposition he shall at least have safe conduct with the paper (and without publicity, if he chooses) to the point where you shall have met with him. The same, if there be two or more persons." This was in answer to a "beseeching request" that the President should "not fail to make the Southern people comprehend that you and all of us are anxious for peace, and prepared to grant liberal terms." Mr. Greeley then "ventures to suggest" his own "Plan of Adjustment," the principal points of which were of the most visionary and impracticable character: a restored and perpetual Union; the utter and perpetual abolishment of slavery; complete amnesty for all political offences, and the restoration of citizenship to all; a grant of \$400,000,000 to the slave States, in compensation for the losses of their loyal citizens by the abolition of slavery; the representation of those States in the House hereafter "on the basis of their total, instead of their Federal, population;" a National Convention "to ratify this adjustment and make such changes in the Constitution as may be deemed advisable."

The outcome of the conference between Mr. Greeley and the gentlemen at Niagara, who had purported to be peace commissioners, amounted to the following, the whole scheme

being circumvented by Mr. Lincoln's characteristically adroit management: First, the Southerners repudiated their being "accredited as the bearers of propositions looking to the establishment of peace," but offered to obtain such on being allowed a safeguard to Richmond and thence to Washington,—which was granted. Second, the issue of a paper from the President, addressed "To whom it may concern," promising to "receive and consider any proposition which embraces the restoration of peace, the integrity of the whole Union, and the abandonment of slavery, and which comes by and with an authority that can control the armies now at war against the United States." Third, an indignant letter published by the Niagara conferees—who only thus saw their way out of their embarrassment in having made false pretences, and who knew that the "safeguard" would profit them nothing in getting out of their scrape—charging the President, in the language of his proclamation, with deception and a change of attitude and spirit. They professed to have heard in his previous communications no hint of the conditions of this manifesto, but that they were animated with a spirit, and contained a proffer of "unconditioned negotiations, which would not compromise the rights or the dignity of either Government." All of which means either that they

lied, or that Mr. Greeley concealed what he ought to have brought forward at the beginning of his conference, or that Mr. Lincoln did in two days entirely change front. We think the most natural solution is to suppose that Mr. Greeley had been so exceedingly diplomatic that he had not yet come to that stage of his ingenious scheme.

The language of the "Commissioners" was in the finest style of *Bombastes Furioso*. To accept the offer of Mr. Lincoln was equivalent to submitting to terms of conquest, and "the generation was yet unborn which would witness such submission." In their closing words is apparent the real intent of their pretended desire for negotiation, and of their attempt to use Horace Greeley as a convenient tool. They express their hope that "this correspondence will not prove wholly barren of good result. If there is any citizen of the Confederate States who has clung to a hope that peace was possible with this Administration of the Federal Government, it will strip from his eyes the last film; or if there be any whose hearts have grown faint under the suffering and agony of this bloody struggle, it will inspire them with fresh energy to endure and brave whatever may yet be requisite to preserve to themselves all that gives dignity and value to life, or hope and consolation to death."

It must be confessed that Mr. Greeley, in his hysterical, deluded, and Quixotic course in this affair, cuts a shabby and pitiable figure. Worse still, we miss his usual frankness and straightforwardness in these goings-between, and in his statements concerning his own and the President's understanding in the matter. And worse than all, we find in his correspondence with Mr. Lincoln, after the affair was over (only made public in July last by Colonel John Hay, who was the President's *aide* in these transactions), a disposition to defend the rebel commissioners in their charge that the President had acted in bad faith by shifting the conditions of negotiation. He also bitterly reproaches Mr. Lincoln for the whole past, and insists upon it that nine tenths of the whole American people, North and South, are sick of slaughter and anxious for peace on almost any terms ; that a peace might have been made last month by "an honest, sincere effort," but it was now doubtful. If it could not be obtained, he implored the President to consent to "*an armistice for one year*, each party to retain unmolested all it now holds, but the rebel ports to be opened. . . . Meantime, let a National Convention be held, and *there will be no more war, at all events.*"

Thus was Horace Greeley fooled again by the enemy whom he was "possessed" to con-

fide in, and thus did he, in his over-anxiety, allow himself to misrepresent his own Government and the spirit of the nation. Thus did he also fail to understand the peculiar fitness and genius of Abraham Lincoln for the crisis for which Providence had assigned him, as a man who followed closely and devoutly the leadings of that Providence, as indicated by events and by popular sentiment,—a man who was wise enough to know that it was worse than useless to advance without the great body of “the plain people” behind him, and who grew up into the knowledge and requirements of the war as it developed itself both North and South. Mr. Greeley tells at length, in his “Recollections,” Mr. Lincoln’s well-known story of the presiding elder, who gave only one advice in regard to crossing a swollen and dangerous stream in Illinois : “Oh, yes, I know all about Fox River ; I have crossed it often, and understand it well. But I have one fixed rule with regard to Fox River : I never cross it till I reach it.” Mr. Greeley, by the way, testifies in reference to the popular impression that Mr. Lincoln “was always overflowing with jocular narrations or reminiscences,” that, during a familiar and frequent intimacy of more than sixteen years, he could not remember to have ever heard him tell a single one. His singular opinion of Lincoln was, that he was



“most inapt for the leadership of a people involved in desperate, agonizing war,” but eminently fitted for the work of conciliation and reconstruction, from which he was snatched away, to the woe of both sections, and that “his true career was just opening when an assassin’s bullet quenched his light of life.” We believe, on the other hand, that the general opinion of the people was that, while adapted for the latter function, the hand which had wielded the thunderbolts might not have been as successful in restoring the right relations between the Government and those who would regard him as their “conqueror,” and that he was as fortunate in death as in life.

Mr. Greeley, moreover, thinks that the bullet of Wilkes Booth only anticipated, by a short period, the end of his career. “He was worn out, and would not, I judge, have lived out his official term, had no one sought his immolation. When I last saw him, a few weeks before his death, I was struck by his haggard, care-fraught face, so different from the sunny, gladsome countenance he first brought from Illinois. I felt that his life hung by so slender a thread that any new access of trouble or excess of effort might suddenly close his career. I had ceased to apprehend his assassination,—had ceased even to think of it; yet the ‘sunset of life’ was plainly looking out of his

kindly eyes, and gleaming from his weather-beaten visage." Mr. Greeley seems to have had some inkling at the last that this was a genuine "man of destiny," like the prophet Samuel, William the Silent, and Washington. "I sat just behind him," he says, speaking of the first inaugural address, "expecting to hear its delivery arrested by the crack of a rifle aimed at his heart ; but it pleased God to postpone the deed, though there was forty times the reason for shooting him in 1860 that there was in 1865, and at least forty times as many intent on killing him or having him killed. No shot was then fired, however ; for his hour had not yet come."

It seems singular to find Horace Greeley criticising Mr. Lincoln on the following grounds, which so exactly expressed his own attitude and short-sightedness in the same precise particulars : "A genial, quiet, essentially peaceful man, he fully believed that there would be no civil war,—no serious desire to consummate disunion. His *faith in reason as a moral force* was so implicit that he did not cherish a doubt that his inaugural address, whereon he had bestowed much thought and labor, when read throughout the South, would dissolve the Confederacy as frost is dissipated by a vernal sun."

We close these significant and self-indicting

comments of Mr. Greeley by the following : “ I did not favor his renomination as President, for I wanted the war driven onward with vehemence, and this was not in his nature. Always dreading that the national credit would fail or the national resolution falter, I feared that his easy ways would allow the Rebellion to obtain European recognition and achieve ultimate success. But that ‘ Divinity that shapes our ends ’ was quietly working out for us a larger and fuller deliverance than I had dared to hope for, leaving to such shortsighted mortals as I, no part but to wonder and adore. We have had chieftains who would have crushed out the Rebellion in six months, and restored ‘ the Union as it was ; ’ but God gave us the one leader whose control secured not only the downfall of the Rebellion, but the eternal overthrow of human slavery under the flag of the Great Republic ! ”

But while Horace Greeley’s course throughout the war was so marred and injured in its influence by his Quixotism and want of consistency, it would be unjust to deny that his efforts for the Union were unstinted and indefatigable. The correspondents of the *Tribune* were kept within the rebel lines and throughout the South, in disguise, at the momentary peril of their lives, and furnished much valu-

able information. Mr. Greeley would doubtless have gone thither himself, if it had been required, and perished without a tremor or a regret in his country's cause. In fact, during the winter of 1860-61 he went to within one hundred miles of St. Louis, to lecture by invitation, when a telegram from leading Republicans there withdrew the invitation out of fear for his safety, and he was compelled to return. He was, in fact, the conspicuous object of hatred and designing malice on the part of Southern sympathizers in the North. The *Herald* for two years from the outbreak of the war had continuously "held up the *Tribune* and its editor to popular execration, and intimated that the time would come when the people would see this, and hang the editor upon a lamp-post." Much of its language is not fit for reproduction here, charging "this crazy, contemptible wretch" with the vilest of teachings and crimes, and with involving his country in a civil war which would result in the extermination of the white or the black race. He was charged,—“that horrible monster, Greeley, as he is called on the floor of Congress,”—with a purpose to destroy the Republic, and his motive as a lust for gain. He was variously explained as being “insane,” or “possessed of a devil,” or “only a bad man made worse by cupidity and disappointment ;” and an elab-

orate attempt was made to strike a balance-sheet between the "Government of the United States, in account with the New York *Tribune*," charging the pecuniary losses and expenses of the war, and *spoils* gathered by the editors and *attachés* of that paper, and also the killed and wounded, to the "monster, ogre, ghoul." "Poor Greeley makes money out of the war. He has contracts which cease when the war ends, and therefore he is determined that the war shall continue. Mad with greed, he rushes on to his ruin, when the people shall lose all patience and suddenly annihilate him and his infamous *Tribune*. That time seems not very far distant."

Poor Greeley, indeed ! He stood between two fires—the one for trying prematurely to end the war, and the other for wilfully prolonging it ! These incitements to personal outrage at length produced their intended fruit. During the draft riots in July, 1863, the office of the *Tribune* was threatened by a mob of several hundreds of the most ruffianly and vicious characters which the slums of New York could produce. They had been hunting negroes all day, and intended to diversify their recreations by "killin' the niggers up there," pointing to the editorial rooms of the *Tribune*. By and by they proceeded from jeers and threats to stone-throwing, and to a charge upon the building,

overthrowing the small band of police stationed in front of it, smashing the shutters and windows and doors, and pouring into the building. But just at that moment the discharge of a pistol and the appearance of a body of troops sent the cowardly roughs flying in a panic, and saved the *Tribune* building. Its editor also was barely saved. He had started forth in the morning, as usual, to go down to his office through the mob, distinctly clamoring for his blood, but was detained by his friends on every pretence. When he reached Ann Street the situation was such that instant recognition seemed inevitable ; and then his friends insisted on thrusting him into a carriage, drawing down the curtains, and driving him back home. He seemed reckless of personal exposure, though entirely conscious of his peril. He even seemed to feel a desire to be sacrificed. To friends and messengers apprising him of danger, he appeared more calm and cool than on ordinary days. " Well, it doesn't make much difference," he said, " I've done my work. I may as well be killed by the mob as die in my bed. Between now and next time is only a little while."

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE POLITICIAN : RECONSTRUCTION.

BUT Horace Greeley's work was not done. We tell the story of what yet remained, not venturing to make any dogmatic estimate of its value or its wisdom, and desirous only that each one judge the incidents by the man rather than the man by the incidents.

In the work of reconstruction, which now claimed the primary attention of all, and a political and legislative war almost as fierce and fiery as the armed contest, it was easy to predict what Mr. Greeley's course would be, and even to what it would finally gravitate. He seems to have had no sense of retributive justice in his nature, or even of exemplary damages. Results and "hind-thought" have demonstrated that our botch-work and failure in reconstruction have arisen from a halting, inconsistent, and incompatible policy, or want of policy. Either punitive and retributive measures should at once and forever have been calmly and judicially taken, while the guilty leaders of the Rebellion were expecting it as a matter of course ; or else a complete and uni-



versal amnesty and restoration of rights to all willing to accept it, exacting only the acknowledged results of the contest, should have been conceded. Instead of that, the sudden and execrable taking off of Abraham Lincoln, the wretched change of President Johnson from an almost maniacal fury to a weak and subservient concession, and his consequent quarrel with Congress, robbed the dominant party of their cooler reason, and prevented any final settlement of the case whatever.

Mr. Greeley's suggestion to the Government at this time, if acted upon, might have produced most beneficent results. It was, that a joint committee of six eminent citizens, such as Governor Andrew, Judge Spaulding, and Gerrit Smith, of the North, and General Lee, Alexander H. Stephens, etc., of the South, be invited to meet at the White House in consultation with the President, and try to agree upon some plan which would commend itself to a majority of Congress. The cause of the failure of this scheme, after its initiation, Mr. Greeley believed to be "that the President did not want harmony with Congress, that he had already made up his mind to break with the party which had elected him, and seek a further lease of power through the favor and support of its implacable enemies."

Mr. Greeley kept this flag flying over the

*Tribune* at this period : " UNIVERSAL AMNESTY, — IMPARTIAL SUFFRAGE." His summary of the things which had been decided by the war was this : That these States were *a nation*, carrying with it a primary allegiance and protection, and the power to pass such laws as the Civil Rights Bill ; that this is to be a land of only free people, and of unconditional suffrage as regards race or color ; and that it shall be the duty of the Government to see that the freedmen shall not be deprived of their rights, or interfered with in their pursuit of happiness.

Thus things went on, until he performed an act (to which we have before referred) as profoundly characteristic as it was profoundly unwise, because sure to revive anew and needlessly the old animosity between North and South, and of his own party against himself. After Jefferson Davis had been captured in his attempt to escape by the Florida coast, he was closely and rigorously imprisoned in Fortress Monroe, indicted for treason, and so remained for nearly two years without any attempt to bring him to trial. Under this condition of things, and in the slight prospect of a trial under President Johnson or by the impulse of the people, it was natural that his friends should desire him to be released on bail. It was also natural that his counsel, a

friend of Horace Greeley, should consult him as to obtaining the names of bondsmen composed of conspicuous opponents of the Rebellion and of the errors which led to it. It was not, however, natural that Horace Greeley, of all men, should offer himself. One less identified with the storm and stress of the anti-slavery and battle epoch would not have given to the still panting and bleeding Unionists that rude shock, which soured conciliation into a new antipathy. As it was, the effect was to divert the attention of the Republicans from the intent of the act to the incongruity of the actor, and to present him to the very minds which he claimed to represent, as an Iscariot, or at least as a lost leader. Besides, his later record had been such that he did not represent to the Southern mind that element of the North at whose mercy they stood, and which still held control of their future.

The uproar excited by this act can only be estimated by those who passed through it. And yet it was only an intensifying and a culmination of what had been exhibiting itself since his manifesto in favor of clemency and conciliation, on the very morning after the surrender of General Lee, but which blazed into new fury at the assassination of President Lincoln. He reminds the Union League Club

of his reception by them on the Saturday following the latter event : " I received a full broadside of your scowls, ere we listened to a clerical harangue intended to prove that Mr. Lincoln had been providentially removed because of his notorious leanings toward clemency, in order to make way for a successor who would give the rebels a full measure of stern justice. I was soon made to understand that I had no sympathizers—or none who dared seem such—in your crowded assemblage. And some maladroit admirer having, a few days afterward, made the Club a present of my portrait, its bare reception was resisted by your then president, in a speech whose vigorous invective was justified solely by my pleadings for lenity to the rebels." A more serious onslaught from another quarter is thus vigorously indicated : " At once a concerted howl of denunciation and rage was sent up from every side against me by the little creatures whom God, for some inscrutable purpose, permits to edit a majority of our minor journals, echoed by a yell of ' Stop my paper ' from thousands of imperfectly instructed readers of the *Tribune*. One impudent puppy wrote me to answer categorically whether I was or was not in favor of hanging Jefferson Davis, adding that I must stop his paper if I were not ! Scores volunteered assurances that I was defying public

opinion ; that most of my readers were against me,—as if I could be induced to write what they wished said rather than what they needed to be told. I never before realized so vividly the baseness of the editorial vocation, according to the vulgar conception of it.”

This uproar has long slept now in the grave of its author, though there is a very general *consensus* among the “Old Guard” that “somebody blundered ;” and the mention of it is too apt to evoke the quick censure, drawn from the depths of old prejudice rather than of later reflection, of the man himself. The writer has not changed his own opinion of the un wisdom and Quixotism of Mr. Greeley’s course, any more than his opinion of the un wisdom of the course pursued in reconstruction by both the Republican and the Southern leaders. But he clearly sees, as he did not then see, that the most condemned and unpopular act of Horace Greeley’s life was the most magnanimous and disinterested, and at the same time one of the most characteristic. It is not our province, or our wish, to regard it from the standpoint of party, or in the interests of reconstruction, but purely as the act and impulse of the man himself. We find in it the key-note of his character and his career, revealing his Puritan independence, his intense passion for justice to every man, though it were

the deadliest enemy of himself and his country, and his tenderness of nature toward the weaker and the fallen. He may seem shockingly inconsistent. He was so, when viewed as a partisan ; and when this act is compared with some of his earlier ones, or with certain of his utterances, or with the logic of his life-work as a whole. But he was eminently consistent with himself, with his own ethical ideals, and his most essential social and political principles. There have been many elaborate defences of his course, as well as unsparing attacks upon it ; but none of the former have seemed so entirely in keeping with the man, or so explanatory of his action in this and in many other things, as that which he himself compressed within the nutshell of an anecdote : “ An Irishman, swearing the peace against his three sons for pertinaciously assaulting and abusing him, made this proper reservation : ‘ And your deponent would ask your honor to deal tenderly with his youngest son, Larry, *who never struck him when he was down.*’ I confess to some fellow-feeling with Larry.”

The bailing of Jefferson Davis was “ foolishness to men ;” but the time is coming, if it is not now, when his countrymen will regard it as one of the bravest, most generous, and most chivalric deeds in all the political history of America. He had nothing to gain for himself,

and everything to lose. Mr. Worldly Wiseman would never have dreamed of it. It is to this day, with multitudes, his unpardonable sin. He had not even the most casual acquaintance with the man to whom he sought to do an act of justice, much less was he drawn to him by a personal liking or approbation; the only communication he ever had with him was a passing introduction in the court-room when the bond was signed.

Two occasions may be instanced for the purpose of illustrating Mr. Greeley's personal independence, his changed relations both toward his old foes and his old friends, and also the attitude to which he was being steadily driven by this culminating act of his policy toward the South.

One was his address, by invitation, while on this mission to Richmond, to a vast assembly of white and black citizens in the African Church. The key-note of his speech was in the language of the Hebrew prophet, "Shall the sword devour forever?" Defining his appearance there as directed neither "for a party nor to a party," and in the interests only of "our common country," he proposed to speak to them with both frankness and kindness. He recapitulated the story of the great Rebellion, the assassination of President Lincoln, the



hostile attitude and unjustifiable legislation of the restored States toward their negro fellow-citizens ; and plainly told them that no reconstruction could be real and enduring which did not guarantee the rights of the colored people of the South,—“ and when I say rights, I mean their equal rights with any and all other persons.” He pictured the special claim which the Southern blacks had acquired from their late masters by their conduct during the war, and argued their case from every point of view with as much freedom as if he were speaking in the New York Academy of Music. He declared his acceptance of the proscription embodied in the military reconstruction act of Congress “ as a precaution against *present* disloyalty ;” but, at the same time, his belief that the nation would insist on its removal as soon “ as reasonable and proper assurances are given that disloyalty has ceased to be powerful and dangerous in the Southern States.” He spoke apologetically of the violence of feeling in the North during the last two years, as not unnatural under the irritation caused by the spirit and acts of the South. As to confiscation, he showed that even the influence and speeches of Thaddeus Stevens—“ the very ablest as well as oldest member of Congress,” its “ recognized leader,” and “ one of the strongest men who has been seen in Congress at any

time"—had been entirely without effect, and not a single other member of Congress had gravely proposed any measure of confiscation. He deprecated the possible insinuation that he regarded it as a condition of restoration that the Southern whites should become Republicans. He heartily wished they were, for he believed the Republican Party, "while it has made some mistakes, and includes its fair share of fools and rascals, does yet embody the nobler instincts and more generous aspirations of the American people." He did not seek their votes for his ticket, except so far as they were converted to his faith. He only asked, that such as were not converted should interpose no obstacle in the way of those who wished so to vote, and that they select representatives who could take the oath prescribed by Congress. "*Your way to restoration lies through the gate of obedience*, and I entreat you to take it promptly and heartily." With some special advice to the colored people to become land-owners, he concluded with these words: "I exhort you, then, Republicans and Conservatives, whites and blacks, to bury the dead past in mutual and hearty good-will, and in a general, united effort to promote the prosperity and exalt the glory of our long-distracted and bleeding, but henceforth reunited, magnificent country."

It may well be considered whether the ability and opportunity of giving such a plain talk, and to have it patiently and respectfully listened to, in the very heart of the rebel South, within two years of the war, did not go a good way to compensate, if not to atone for, the bailing of Jefferson Davis.

The other event to which we have referred was his letter to the Union League Club on May 23d, 1867, in response to an invitation of its president that he should attend a special meeting, "for the purpose of taking into consideration the conduct of Horace Greeley, a member of this Club, who has become a bondsman for Jefferson Davis, late chief officer of the Rebel government," as an "opportunity of being heard on the subject." The gist of his spirited and defiant answer is here given: "Gentlemen, I shall not attend your meeting this evening. I have an engagement out of town, and I shall keep it. I do not recognize you as capable of judging or even fully apprehending me. You evidently regard me as a weak sentimentalist, misled by a maudlin philosophy. I arraign you as narrow-minded blockheads, who would like to be useful to a great and good cause, but don't know how. Your attempt to base a great, enduring party on the hate and wrath engendered by a bloody civil war, is as though you should plant a colony

on an iceberg which had somehow drifted into a tropical ocean. I tell you here, that, out of a life earnestly devoted to the good of human kind, your children will select my going to Richmond and signing that bail-bond as the wisest act, and will feel that it did more for freedom and humanity than all of you were competent to do, though you lived to the age of Methuselah." He asked nothing of them but to proceed to their purposed expulsion of him in a direct and manly way. "Understand, once for all, that I dare you and defy you, and that I propose to fight it out on the line that I have held from the day of Lee's surrender. So long as any man was seeking to overthrow our Government, he was my enemy ; from the hour in which he laid down his arms, he was my formerly erring countryman. So long as any is at heart opposed to the national unity, the Federal authority, or to that assertion of the equal rights of all men which has become practically identified with loyalty and nationality, I shall do my best to deprive him of power ; but whenever he ceases to be thus, I demand his restoration to all the privileges of American citizenship. . . ."

The good sense of the Club, its appreciation of pluck and independence, and its sympathy with the evident soreness and sickness of a badgered and wounded heart, contented itself

with passing the simple resolution, "that there is nothing in the action of Horace Greeley, relative to the bailing of Jefferson Davis, calling for proceedings in this Club."

We leave Horace Greeley standing on this lonely political Teneriffe, looking wistfully and somewhat dazedly into the future,—a future of which he felt himself called to be the explorer, if not the discoverer; called not less to endure the hardship and the isolation incident to all who are in advance of their generation, if not of their day. The next pages of his life were only a painful but brave struggle against public sentiment, party feeling, and doubtless more or less of a fire in the rear from those who believed that this wayward pilot would steer his own and their *Tribune* upon the rocks. We leave him looking out into a fancied Pacific, while we proceed to the culminating event of his strange and stormy career, and the extraordinary and paradoxical future which shaped itself out of the mists before him.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE CANDIDATE FOR OFFICE.

IT is not within the scope of our undertaking to narrate the rise of the Independents in the Republican Party, nor their history except so far as it involved that of Horace Greeley. It was natural that, as time wore on, and the great facts accomplished by the war had been embodied in the Constitution and in legislation, the division of sentiment on the general policy of reconstruction, or rather of dealing with the South, in governmental interference, race questions, and the like, should show itself more distinctly. Still more that the disgraceful failure of the carpet-bag governments, and the control of the party by its radical element, under the able and relentless leadership of Thaddeus Stevens, should render the dissent so pronounced as to threaten a party revolt, if not dissolution.

It is natural that the long, and now absolute, dominance of one political party should produce a state of things which should renew the attention of political reformers to the question of reforming a civil service that carried with it a

distribution of offices simply appalling, if regulated by no principle but that of the spoils theory. It is natural that the growth of political corruption, which had been both bred and overlooked by the exigencies of a war for the country's life, should now become the object of increased and alarmed scrutiny from the very clearing of the atmosphere which the whirlwind of the war had brought. Especially was this effect emphasized by the rapid series of explosions in the executive and legislative departments during the first term of Grant's administration, resulting in part from the fact that the time had come for the subterranean gases to explode, and partly because of the infelicitous appointments which the easy and credulous methods of that great man had led him into making,—or into having made for him. And it is equally natural that Horace Greeley should be found at the front in these protests.

Mr. Greeley had never ceased to be a Republican, but he had long occupied the position of an independent within the party,—certainly ever since the rejection of his compromise and disunion counsels which followed upon the election of Mr. Lincoln to the Presidency. And having been all his lifetime a practical politician quite as much as a reformer, it was impossible for him not to give objective form and direction to his agitations. More and more trenchant and



continuous became his criticisms and censures of the Administration, till at last, from a critic and a censor, he found himself in the attitude of an antagonist and a pronounced revolter. As the time drew near for the election of 1872, he declared uncompromising opposition to the renomination of General Grant, and made no secret of his determination not to support it if made.

The nomination was inevitable. The large number of disaffected and independents felt that there was no alternative left to them but to stand up and be counted. A convention of "Liberals" was called on May 1st, 1872, in the city of Cincinnati. It was a very large and representative body from all parts of the country. Carl Schurz was chosen president, and stated the objects of the movement substantially as we have given it; and on the third day Mr. Horace White, Chairman of the Platform Committee, reported an address and resolutions, which were enthusiastically adopted without dissent. The address—an arraignment of President Grant and his supporters—was drawn up in the same rhetorical vein as that of the Declaration of Independence against George III. The resolutions, after recognizing and reaffirming the results of the war, demanded universal amnesty, "the supremacy of the civil over the military authority, and impartial

suffrage,—for the individual, the largest liberty consistent with public order ; for the State, self-government ; and for the nation, a return to the methods of peace and the constitutional limitations of power.” It specially emphasized civil-service reform, insisted upon a return to specie payments, and remitted the question of protection and free trade to Congress, “ wholly free from executive interference or dictation.” The remainder consists of undisputed generalities.

A number of names were prominently before the convention for the Presidential nomination, including Charles Francis Adams, ex-Senator Lyman Trumbull, Judge David Davis, ex-Governor Curtin, and B. Gratz Brown, of Missouri, who subsequently received the second place upon the ticket. The real contest lay between Mr. Adams and Horace Greeley. The former led largely on the first ballot, receiving 203 votes to the latter’s 147, out of a total of 714. Both increased their vote during the entire six ballots from the ranks of the other candidates, but Mr. Greeley much the more rapidly, receiving on the second ballot 239 to Mr. Adams’s 243. On the sixth ballot the two names stood, Greeley 332 to his competitor’s 324 (necessary to a choice, 358) ; but before the result was officially announced a rapid changing of votes took place, which made the

final result, Greeley 482, and Adams 187. There is no reason to suppose that Mr. Greeley either sought or expected this nomination. He had made no concealment of his preference for Mr. Trumbull. He was not, however, present at the convention.

Mr. Greeley's letter of acceptance was dated May 20th. It heartily indorsed the platform, expressed his confidence in the triumph of the movement, and promised that, if elected, he should be "the President, not of a party, but of the whole people." The preference of Mr. Greeley to Mr. Adams may fairly be questioned as to its expediency, especially in view of the final results, but there can be no doubt of its justice and pre-eminently representative character. No one had so early occupied the ground of that platform, or done so much to educate and inspire the men who were now prepared to stand upon it. It may not unfitly be said of the building of that ship :

" We know what master laid thy keel,  
What workman wrought thy ribs of steel,  
In what a forge and what a heat  
Were shaped the anchors of thy hope."

In the succeeding month of July the Democratic National Convention met in Baltimore. The thoroughly disheartened, if not demoralized condition of the party, and its recognition of the utter impossibility of succeeding in

its own strength, or on its old ground, was demonstrated by its adoption both of the platform and the candidates of the Cincinnati Convention. Mr. Greeley, in his letter of acceptance, frankly recognizes expediency as the sole motive of his own selection, not only over a typical Democrat, but over such "liberals" as Messrs. Adams, Trumbull, Davis, and Brown. It was characteristic of him to say: "I owe my adoption at Baltimore wholly to the fact that I had already been nominated at Cincinnati, and that a concentration of forces upon any new ticket had been proved impracticable. He then proceeds to take the Democrats at their word, and to fix upon them the full significance and responsibility of their act, in neither "accepting the candidates of the Liberal Republicans upon grounds entirely their own," nor (as the first Whig National Convention did in nominating Harrison and Tyler) presenting them without adopting any platform whatever, but as having chosen to plant themselves, "by a vote nearly unanimous, upon the fullest and clearest enunciation of principles which are at once incontestably Republican and emphatically Democratic." He reminds them of his past record of anti-slavery service, insists upon the full enfranchisement of his "*white* fellow-countrymen," and an amnesty "complete and universal, in spirit as well as in

letter." He concludes with these among other words : " Gentlemen, your platform, which is also mine, assures me that Democracy is not to stand for one thing and Republicanism for another, but that those terms are to mean in politics, as they have always meant in the dictionary, substantially one and the same thing—namely, Equal rights, regardless of creed, or clime, or color. I hail this as a genuine New Departure from outworn feuds and meaningless contentions in the direction of Progress and Reform."

Previously to his nomination for the Presidency, Horace Greeley had been presented several times, successfully or unsuccessfully, as a candidate for political office. In 1861 he was a candidate for United States Senator before the Republican caucus, his competitors being William M. Evarts and Judge Ira Harris,—his vote on the first ballot being 40, to 42 for the former and 20 for the latter, with a scattering vote of 13. It soon became apparent by his increasing vote that Mr. Greeley would be nominated, when, by his own admission, Thurlow Weed, the Warwick and Macchiavelli of Republican politics (who occupied throughout a place in the Executive Chamber of the Capitol), succeeded in persuading a number of the supporters of Mr. Evarts to "switch off" in

favor of Harris, so as to give him sixty votes to Mr. Greeley's forty-nine, and thus made him Senator. Mr. Weed's excuse for this action was Mr. Greeley's "secession sentiments" and peace policy. Mr. Greeley, however, and his friends preferred to consider it as the retaliation for his own part in defeating Mr. Seward's nomination for the Presidency in 1860.

In 1867, he was a delegate at large to the Convention of the State of New York for the revision of its constitution, concerning which appointment he characteristically remarks (in repudiating the charge of having been greedy of office), "I for some time earned \$6 per day and paid \$4 for my board." In 1869 the Republican Convention had nominated a State ticket and adjourned, when three of the candidates peremptorily declined to run. The State Committee, in their desperation, named Horace Greeley to fill the vacancy for Comptroller, in his absence on a lecturing tour in the West, without asking his consent, and he allowed his name to stand. So also in the previous year his name was used as their "forlorn hope," by the Republicans of the district in which the *Tribune* office was situated, as their candidate for Congress. He was similarly utilized in the Sixth District in 1870, at a time when sickness prevented his making a personal canvass. In

all of these instances, defeat was a foregone conclusion.

In 1848 he was nominated by the Whigs for a three-months' vacancy in Congress without his previous knowledge, as a makeshift to take the place of one who unexpectedly declined—James Brooks, of the *Express*, being nominated for the full term. It was the General Taylor year, and he was carried in on the flood tide, by a majority of more than two thousand over his two Democratic ("Cass" and "Van Buren") competitors. He received over two hundred more than Mr. Brooks. His declared sympathy with the Irish cause both gained and lost him votes. His district included all of New York above Fourteenth Street, with three wards below, including about one-third of the city's population.

The Thirty-first Congress contained many notable names. Webster, Calhoun, and Clayton were still in the Senate. Robert C. Winthrop was Speaker of the House. Mr. Greeley considered *Alexander H. Stephens* its "most acute and, perhaps, ablest member." Other well-known names (some of them since too well known) were Horace Mann, John G. Palfrey, Jacob Collamer, George P. Marsh, Joshua R. Giddings, General Robert C. Schenck, John Wentworth, Howell Cobb, *John M. Botts*, *Robert Toombs*, Jacob Thomp-



son, and George W. Jones, afterward Speaker. We have placed some of the Whigs in italics. Above all, Abraham Lincoln sat among the Whigs, and Andrew Johnson among the Democrats, the latter in his third term. Mr. Greeley says of the former : " Though a new member, he was personally a favorite on our side. He seemed a quiet, good-natured man, did not aspire to leadership, and seldom claimed the floor ; I think he made but one set speech during that session, and this speech by no means a long one. Though a strong partisan, he voted against the bulk of his party once or twice, when that course was dictated by his convictions. He was one of the most moderate, though firm opponents of slavery extension, and was notably of a buoyant, cheerful spirit." He expresses his conviction that there were not more than twelve members who were " on the make," and that they were " a class by themselves as clearly as if they were so many black sheep in a large flock of white ones."

Horace Greeley's brief career in this Congress was a thoroughly characteristic one. It was rather that of a political reformer than of a routine legislator ; and his methods were those of a newspaper man rather than of a parliamentarian. He served on the Committee on Public Lands. His first act on taking his seat—the very next day, December 5th—was to

give notice of a Land Reform bill to discourage speculation and provide cheap homes for actual settlers. The Homestead bill he introduced on December 13th. A week later, he threw his famous mileage bomb into the House from the citadel of the *Tribune*. This was a minute and unsparing exposure of the excessive sums drawn by Members of Congress for travelling expenses, whereby "they now charged and received twice as much for travelling five days in a sumptuous cabin, replete with every luxury, as their fathers paid for roughing it over the mountains in fifteen to twenty days at a far greater cost." Improving his opportunity as a member, he obtained access to the schedules of Compensation and Mileage. He says: "I hired a reporter to transcribe them, and (using as a basis of comparison the United States Topographer's official statement of the distances from Washington by the most direct mail-route of each post-office in the country) I aimed to show exactly how much could be saved in the case of each member, by computing mileage on the most direct post-route instead of "the usually travelled route," and published the result in his paper.

"I had expected," he says, "that it would kick up a dust; but my expectations were far outrun." There was no attempt at defence; the only reply, by the best men involved, was

that they complied with the letter of the law,—though no one of these lawmakers had made any movement to reform the law by adjusting mileage to the changed conditions of travel. But there was a very vigorous, and partially successful attempt to persecute the accuser of the brethren. He was himself accused of falsification and of base motives, and was vilified and ridiculed in every form of oratory,—through all of which he sat placid, if not unheeding. Well he might, for the whole press and the country were on his side. Advantage was taken of his inadvertently voting *aye* on an extravagant item for books, in the rapidity and confusion of passing the Deficiency bill, which he had privately denounced and declared his intention to vote against. A movement was set on foot to expel him, which was nipped in the bud by “Long John” Wentworth’s characteristically saying, “Why, you blessed fools, do you want to make him President?” It will be borne in mind that all this time Mr. Greeley had not introduced the subject into the House, made no move there regarding it, and scarcely alluded to it. No immediate action was successfully taken, but this was the entering wedge which long ago exploded the mileage scandal and extortion.

This was Mr. Greeley’s principal achievement as a Congressman, though he undertook two or

three other thankless jobs of saving the people's money, and staying the mean and unscrupulous hands of his fellow-members. The question of slavery in the new Territories acquired by the Mexican War was already a burning issue. In fact, the slaveholders were cleverly outwitted at this session, by accepting the motion that for the present "the existing laws should remain in force till changed by consent of Congress," not realizing that the existing laws were those of Mexico, which forbade slavery. Mr. Greeley took no leading part on this subject, speaking only some twenty minutes on a single occasion, to the great disappointment of many on both sides, who had expected him to ride it as a hobby in the House, as he had in his paper. The ill-suppressed excitement of the pro-slavery men is illustrated by the fact that, on the occasion just alluded to, Mr. Giddings was assaulted, and Mr. Greeley gives it as his confident belief that, "I could not have passed quietly through the Democratic side of the House between ten and two o'clock that night without being also assaulted ; and, had I resisted, beaten within an inch of my life, if not killed outright."

His conclusion of the whole matter is thus stated : "I have not since been a member, nor held any post under the Federal Government ; it is not likely that I ever shall again hold one.

Yet I look back upon those three months I spent in Congress as among the most profitably employed of any in the course of my life. I saw things from a novel point of view ; and if I came away from the Capitol no wiser than I went thither, the fault was entirely my own."

Before proceeding to his Presidential campaign, a word must be said about Horace Greeley's relation to office. It has been the endeavor of Mr. Thurlow Weed and his echoes, ever since Mr. Greeley's death, to represent him as a persistent office-seeker, childishly ambitious of any and every appointment, and that this affords the key to his whole public career, and his relations alike to the Republican Party and his connection with the personal fortunes of William H. Seward. We have already indicated the beggarly showing of candidacies and offices which fell to his lot up to the time at which we have now arrived, and which, together with the last, were honors thrust upon him. On one or two occasions he seems to have suggested to Mr. Weed " a willingness to accept nominations," but that gentleman admits, " he did not seem anxious." And he always readily acquiesced in a contrary advice or decision. He so assented to the setting aside of his name for Governor in 1854—a nomination which he had never asked for ; the special

cause of his affront being that the Seward and Weed power had set him aside, even for Lieutenant-Governor, in favor of Henry J. Raymond's nomination, which he regarded as "bitterly humbling to himself." There is no evidence that he was a seeker for Federal appointments, though he deeply felt it that successive Administrations, for which he had labored at great self-sacrifice, not even passed the compliment of offering their honors. Thurlow Weed screens himself behind an "it is said" in his insinuation, that Mr. Greeley wanted the Postmaster-Generalship under Lincoln, though the dead man had years before emphatically denied it. Mr. Greeley also refutes a *World* slander in 1866, by showing that only one or two persons ever connected with the *Tribune* had ever received Federal appointments.

It may be admitted that Mr. Greeley's restless nature contemplated public duties with pleasure, and that he believed himself eminently fitted for their discharge. It is plain, also, that this much-beset and misrepresented man craved popular recognition; and that, having long served as a pack-horse for other men's affairs, he felt sore and humiliated at not being offered a crumb from the tables which he had provided. But that he was avid for office as a compensation or a prize in itself, there is

no evidence ; neither that he was ever moved one jot in his political action by the hopes or fears of an office-seeker.

Of course even this was unworthy of so great a man, who should have realized that his editorial chair, made and uplifted by his own genius and industry, was a higher throne than any ready-made one into which he could be put. Above all, he was inconsistent with himself. In 1861 he wrote : " There is no office in the gift of the Government or of the people, which I either hope, wish, or expect to hold. I certainly shall not parade myself as declining places that are not offered for my acceptance ; but I am sure that the President has always known that I desired no office at his hands ; and mutual and influential friends who at various times volunteered to ask me whether I would take any place whatever, were uniformly and conclusively assured that I would not." As late as April, 1869, he expressed his opinion that it was " impossible for a journalist to reconcile independence in his profession with office-holding ; a journalist who holds an office writes in a strait-jacket." It is only fair, however, to add, that he said also in the same editorial, that he did not " regard with admiration the practical monopoly of all important civil trusts by men bred to the law," nor " that Ben Franklin degraded or disparaged the edi-



torial profession by serving his country as Ambassador and Postmaster-General." He had no patience with the importunate "office-beggars," as he called them, who beset him, or with the seeking of office as a mere reward for political services.

In 1868 he wrote certain words, anent Mr. Seward's Presidential aspiration, which he little realized would so soon "come home to roost" in his own barn: "One who has all but clutched the glittering prize, yet failed to secure it, always thereafter seems to have suffered from the aspiration or the failure—possibly from both. Great, intellectually, as Daniel Webster was, he would have been morally greater, and every way more useful and honored, had he sternly responded, 'Get thee behind me, Satan!' to every suggestion that he might yet attain the Presidency." Alas! men's actions seldom square with their ideals. Henry J. Raymond, one of the most inveterate and favored office-seekers among our great journalists, could write: "The Administrations cannot render the country a greater service than by excluding the controlling conductors of the newspaper press from public office, and thus relieving them from all temptation to betray or neglect the interests which are mainly committed to their care." Perhaps if these two great men had not regarded each other as rivals

for popular or Presidential "recognition," they might have been less bitter enemies, if not better friends. The nomination of the editor of the *Times* for Lieutenant-Governor in 1854, is distinctly stated by Thurlow Weed as "the entering wedge to final alienation between us,"—meaning between himself and Mr. Seward on the one hand and Horace Greeley on the other.

Undoubtedly it was very wrong for Horace Greeley to let himself be run as the opposition candidate for the Presidency—from the Republican point of view. But, in estimating this act of this man, our business is to view it from his own standpoint. This has been luminously expressed for him by his lifelong friend and co-laborer, Mr. James S. Pike: "His being a candidate was purely a secondary and accidental circumstance. It was assumed when he was scarcely thought of as a Presidential candidate, and when any betting man would have offered a thousand to one against his chances for such a nomination." When the nomination came which placed him at the head of the movement which he had shaped and developed, if not originated, "what was Mr. Greeley to do under the circumstances? He certainly was not to blame for his nomination. He had not contrived it; he had not anticipated it. Was

he to repel the spontaneous judgment at Cincinnati, that he was the most fit man to nominate? Was he to withdraw, and say he would not run? It is none too much to say, that he could with propriety do neither. Of all men in the movement, it was not for him to balk at the first step of the convention, and thus interpose an obstacle to its success by discrediting its judgment. Neither because the Democrats subsequently thought it for their interest to confirm the nomination and to accept Mr. Greeley as their candidate, is it to be imputed to him for a crime. He was but the passive recipient of unexpected honors from his old adversaries. Their action did not change his own self-chosen position, nor swerve him a hair from his principles. He did not become a Democrat, or a representative of Democracy, by accepting the nomination. He was the same Horace Greeley and the same Republican as before, and would have so remained had the fates been propitious and placed him in the Presidential chair."

We can have no better example of the spirit of independence, as well as of determination to betray none of the political principles for which he stood, than his reply to a free-trader who urged him to accept that policy as most likely to insure success. Mr. Greeley admits the expediency of the party's adopting that

position : " I have no doubt as to the policy," but " I am not the man. . . . I am a ferocious protectionist. You must take some man like Gratz Brown or Trumbull." This was written October 18th, 1871, and made public.

We may believe that Horace Greeley made a mistake, as did the Democrats, but it is difficult to see how he was in this course acting otherwise than it was his right to do, and as his highest and purest sense of duty compelled him to do.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE CLOSING SCENES.

MR. GREELEY'S canvass was signaled by one of the most extraordinary spectacles ever witnessed in this country. For the first time in our history a candidate for the Presidency took the stump and traversed every part of the Union. A man who had been, perhaps, the most representative and most cordially hated anti-slavery leader of the North, spoke without hindrance in what had been the centres of slavery, secession, and war in the South, into which he had not been permitted to penetrate even for a lecturing tour, and that without withdrawing one jot of his utterances, or swerving one hair's-breadth from his attitude toward slaveholding and disunion, or the championship of the colored race. One whose life had been spent, and his successes achieved, at the editor's desk suddenly sprang into the front rank of popular orators, as notable for the logical as for the rhetorical strength with which he marshalled and propelled his argument. He spoke in Maine as early as August 14th, and his speeches were of daily occurrence during most of the

intervening time till the election. I had it from the lips of ex-Governor Randolph, of New Jersey, just after his return from an official accompanying of Mr. Greeley on his tour through the South, that the experience had been a revelation to him, and its effect a total revolution in his estimate of the man. He had been anything but an admirer, and the nomination was highly distasteful to him. But he came home with something akin to reverence for the single-minded and chivalric spirit, and for the vast and varied resources, and consummate skill and force in using them, as well as for the almost superhuman endurance which marked this unparalleled canvass.

In his key-note speech at Portland, Me., Mr. Greeley not only emphatically stated that no claim or suggestion of office had ever been made by any one who favored his nomination at either convention, but he deliberately gave notice that if any did, he must expect to stand aside for "the more modest and reticent." He furthermore declared that "no man or woman in all the South ever asked of me, either directly or through another, any other pledge than is given in all my acts and words from the hour of Lee's surrender down to this moment. . . . From those who support me in the South I have heard but one demand, justice ; but one desire, reconciliation."

Shortly after receiving the Cincinnati nomination, Mr. Greeley issued the following card : " The *Tribune* has ceased to be a party organ, but the unexpected nomination of its editor seems to involve it in a new embarrassment. All must be aware that the position of a journalist who is at the same time a candidate is at best irksome and difficult,—that he is fettered in action and restrained in criticism by the knowledge that whatever he may say or do is closely scanned by thousands eager to find in it what may be so interpreted as to annoy or perplex those who are supporting him as a candidate, and to whom his shackled condition will not permit him to be serviceable. The undersigned, therefore, withdraws absolutely from the conduct of the *Tribune*, and will henceforth until further notice exercise no control or supervision over its columns."

Inasmuch as the course which he pursued as a constant platform-speaker throughout the canvass was replete with the same " embarrassments" and perils from the standpoint of his own candidacy, we may, perhaps, be permitted to read between these lines a latent doubt whether " the *Tribune*," however it might favor the election of its editor, was likely to allow itself, without much generating of internal combustion, to become the personal organ of the opposition party's candidate for the Presidency.



The result of this memorable campaign may be briefly stated. Of the popular vote, Mr. Greeley received 2,834,079, to 3,597,070 for General Grant ; of the States only Maryland, Georgia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Missouri, and Texas went for him. One of the saddest features of this pitiable exhibit is, that even the electoral votes which he had won could not be recorded for his name.

The causes of his defeat are not far to seek. The first was the unshakable hold of General Grant upon the popular imagination, gratitude, and confidence, which led men to disconnect him from the responsibilities of his administration. The second was a widespread distrust of Mr. Greeley's fitness for the office, — of his "levelness," his practical capacity, and of his consistency. The third and fundamental one was the yet impregnable power of the Republican Party over the masses of the people, and the irresistible momentum which it had gained as the saviour of the nation. The fourth was the still potent feeling of the Union element, which Homer's Trojan expressed in the much-quoted words : "*Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes.*"

And, finally, the South itself was not ready to swallow so old and alien a bait as Horace Greeley, nor was it at all confident that he would not prove quite unmanageable ; they

naturally queried whether "the game was worth the bag."

It is said that Mr. Greeley confidently expected his own election up to the last hour. His remarkable political foresight and calmness of judgment forsook him, as I have known physicians, notable for their prognosis of other people's cases, utterly self-deceived in their own. But bitter and keen as the disappointment was, it is not likely that it would of itself have crushed a spirit so inured to harsh experience, or broken down a constitution so rugged and splendid in health. Promptly, as soon as the result was known (November 6th), he published another card, resuming his editorship of the *Tribune*, which he had relinquished "on embarking in another line of business." But to the terrific exertions and excitement of the past months, following upon a whole life of intense toil and strain, came the illness and death of his wife during the later stages of his canvass. He watched at her bedside day and night. His own sense of the stress and exhaustion of those days was expressed to a friend about a week before she died: "I am a broken old man; I have not slept one hour in twenty-four for a month; if she lasts, poor soul, another week, I shall go before her." Insomnia resulted in brain fever,

and on November 29th he rested from his labors.

His funeral was one of the most notable which New York has ever witnessed. The great heart of the city, where this eminent and devoted citizen had so long wrought and fought, seemed to awake to an appreciation too long deferred, and to a profound and affectionate sympathy. By a general request the body was laid in state in the City Hall, and for one whole day the plain people poured through in a continuous stream (estimated at over forty thousand), to look once more upon the pure and kindly face of their "Tribune." "The poor shed tears over him; the laboring man stopped work, that he might pay a last tribute to him who spent forty years in working hard for the benefit of workers. A more spontaneous manifestation of universal sorrow has not been seen in this generation."

Everything was arranged with a simplicity which became the man, and the ceremonies were only the more impressive. Funeral services were held in the Church of the Divine Paternity, with which he was connected, and were conducted by his pastor, Dr. Chapin, who delivered a funeral discourse, and by Henry Ward Beecher, who also made an address. Other distinguished clergymen occupied the pulpit, and among those present were the President and Vice-President and Chief-Justice of

the United States, the Governor of the State, and the Mayor of the city, Senators and Members of Congress, and others of official rank. All along the route of the procession—consisting of a hundred and twenty carriages, with no music or military guard—the places of business were closed, and the public and private buildings draped with mourning, and the streets were lined by throngs of citizens in respectful silence. The bells of St. Paul's and Trinity were tolled as the *cortege* passed down Broadway to the Whitehall Ferry. The remains were interred in Greenwood Cemetery.

The closing scenes of Horace Greeley's life were strikingly dramatic, and with not a little of the tragic element. They were the culmination of a long Promethean struggle, at fearful odds, in behalf of his race and country, whose tardy appreciation he never lived to receive. In fact he died under the crushing weight of an apparent verdict of condemnation. His end was the direct *dénouement* of a course to which he was compelled by his own "*demon*," which represented to him his highest ideals of truth and honor and righteousness. Around him as he fell lay strewn the wreck of his political fortunes, and, it is said, of the hard-won earnings of "a busy life." His beloved home was broken up by the death, before his own failing

eyes, of the wife who had shared his aspirations and endeavors for more than thirty-six years. There is reason to think that he already had a foretaste of the different relation which he could not have helped sustaining toward the *Tribune* itself, which was being rescued by other hands out of the peril and depletion to which his later career had led it.

But it was not the tragedy of failure in the only real sense,—where a man has failed in courage, integrity, and self-devotion, or in steadfast heed to the divine voice, which asked : “ For what is a man profited if he gain the whole world, and lose or forfeit his own soul ? ”

## CHAPTER XIX.

### HOME LIFE AND TRAVEL.

IT was not Horace Greeley's lot to ascend "from the log-cabin to the White House," nor even to the brown-stone front. But both the beginning of his life under the humble parental roof, and its later years under his own, amid all their drawbacks, and his intermediate experiences of a long and dreary boarding-house existence, enabled him to taste the sweetness of what he loved to call "that dear hut, my home." Notwithstanding his temporary phantasy about the phalanstery, no man ever more thoroughly appreciated, both objectively and subjectively, the home life. He met his future wife at Dr. Graham's boarding-house, in New York, and was married in 1836. During the next six years they lived within a stone's throw of the City Hall, in order to be convenient to his business, except a brief period, in which they strayed as far north as Broome Street. After the disappointing Presidential election of 1844, Mr. Greeley—"worn out by anxiety and effort, and thoroughly used up"—turned with longing to the

thought of a suburban home, and accordingly selected an old neglected and somewhat decayed country seat at Turtle Bay on the East River, nearly opposite the southernmost point of Blackwell's Island, comprising eight acres of land, with shade and fruit-trees, shrubbery, garden, and a wooded ravine. It was reached from the old "Boston (or Harlem) Road" at Forty-ninth Street, by a narrow and devious lane a quarter of a mile long and very dark at night. It was profoundly quiet and secluded, and was connected with "down-town" by an hourly stage on the Third Avenue. Margaret Fuller, who soon became one of the household, thus describes it: "The house, old-fashioned and of mellow tint, fronts on a flower garden filled with shrubs, large vines, and trim box borders. On both sides are beautiful trees, standing fair, full-grown, and clear. Passing through a wide hall you come out upon a piazza stretching the whole length of the house, where one can walk in all weathers; and thence, by a step or two, on a lawn, with picturesque masses of rocks, shrubs, and trees, overlooking the East River. Gravel-paths lead by several turns down the steep bank to the water's edge, where around the rocky point a small bay curves, in which boats are lying; and, owing to the currents and the set of the tide, the sails glance sidelong, seeming to greet the house as they sweep by.



The beauty, seen by moonlight, is truly transporting."

It is restful to our thought and sympathies, as it was to his own weary and heavy-laden body and spirit, to follow this overwrought man out of the burden and battle of public life into these cool, sequestered scenes—so different from the clanging and crowded down-town streets that at first the intense silence made him sleepless—the dark lane, the gentle ripple of the river on the bank, the serene moonlight on the water and the lawn and among the shadows of the trees, the glimpses of the gliding, white-sailed craft, and the Sabbath rest amid the sacred silence or the choral innocence of the groves.

Seven years later he purchased a farm, or rather the rugged and wooded ends of two farms, in Westchester County on the Harlem Railroad, where it crosses a small mill-stream, known by its Indian name of Chappaqua Creek. He apologizes for his choice of "a rocky, wooded hillside, sloping to the north of west, with a bog at its foot," by the difficulty of finding elsewhere a piece of land near the city combining Mrs. Greeley's three prerequisites—"a peerless spring of pure, soft, living water, a cascade or brawling brook, and woods largely composed of evergreens." His own satisfaction in his tinkling brook, his dozen or more springs,

and his woods—"the pride of the farm" and covering at least twenty-five of his seventy-five acres—is undisguised. The woodman's spirit and habit of his youth came out in his almost chuckling enumeration of the various kinds of trees and shrubs, only two of which were unfamiliar to him at his coming. His hands soon itched with the old wood-chopper's feeling, and henceforth he had at least one resemblance to the "grand old man" of Hawarden. Whenever he could spare a Saturday he tried to give a good part of it to his patch of forest. "I am a poor chopper," he says, "yet the axe is my doctor and delight. Its use gives the mind just enough occupation to prevent its falling into revery or absorbing trains of thought, while every muscle of the body receives sufficient, yet not exhausting, exercise. If every youth and man, from fifteen to fifty years old, could wield an axe two hours per day, dyspepsia would vanish from the earth, and rheumatism become decidedly scarce. I wish all our boys would learn to love the axe."

His "house in the woods," which, though small and hastily erected, he persisted in calling "my house" long after its desertion for a more commodious and better built dwelling on the edge both of the farm and of the village, was his retreat where he kept his books and

treasures, and received his friends only as he saw fit to be "at home" to them.

Those who wish to read one of the most delightful chapters in autobiography will find his account of his "farming"—his tree-planting, his evergreen hedge, his greenhouse and garden, his orchards, his crops, his stubborn swamp, his wonderful barn—all lovingly dwelt upon in the "Recollections." His early and hereditary turn for farming reasserted itself, so that he could say, as he looked over his reclaimed swamp with its crop of flax, "All else that I have done may be of no avail, but what I have done here is *done*; it will last." He never tired of Chappaqua, nor did his wife, who spent far more of her time there. "I think we all," he said, "as we grow old, love to feel and know that some spot of earth is peculiarly our own—ours to possess and to enjoy, ours to improve and to transmit to our children."\*

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\* On April 3d, 1890, the Greeley homestead at Chappaqua was destroyed by fire. Miss Gabrielle Greeley, the only surviving member of Horace Greeley's family, has made this place, so associated with the busy and unselfish life of her father, her home, and has endeared herself to the people of all the country round, so that when the news of the fire spread, every one—man, woman, and child—did everything to save the house. Only a few articles were saved—a number of books out of the remains of the vast library, Mr. Greeley's chair and desk, and a little furniture—but the unpretentious

It must be confessed that neither husband nor wife (devoted as they were to home and to each other) were endowed with that peculiarly home-making quality which adds so largely to the domestic felicity of many lives. Mrs. Greeley was a much more consistent disciple of Graham than he, and for years "kept her house in strict accordance with her convictions." He *naïvely* describes the effect of her housekeeping, for which she never even deigned an explanation to her friends and relatives who visited or temporarily sojourned with them : "As politeness usually repressed complaint or inquiry on their part, their first experiences of a regimen which dispensed with all they deemed most appetizing could hardly be observed without a smile. Usually a day, or at most two, of beans and potatoes, boiled rice, puddings, bread and butter, with no condiment but salt, and never a pickle, was all they could abide ; so, bidding her a kind adieu, each in turn departed to seek elsewhere a more congenial hospitality." Even Margaret Fuller, who was supremely contented at their house, spoke of it as "kept in a Castle Rackrent style." It was, according to her description, full of affection

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little house and much that will be deplored by students of American life, are gone, together with several trunks containing some manuscripts, and the letters received from prominent men all over the world.

and hospitality; but the mistress had been a typical Yankee schoolmadam, "crazy for knowledge" and with little taste or training for the prosaic and material part of domestic life.

And yet it is into that home life that we must peep in order fully to appreciate the tender side of Horace Greeley's nature. With delicacy he lifts a little corner of his heart's tenderest and saddest experiences in the chapter of his "Recollections" which he entitles "My Dead." There is no elegiac prose in our language more touching than the words with which he tells the story of the death of five of his children out of seven, especially of his pride and darling, "Pickie," who died in his seventh year. "Pickie" was thoroughly human, though full of wise and deep sayings, a conversationalist who drew many to the house, as well as charmed admiring circles outside. He must have been a boy of striking loveliness, as attested by this tribute: "I looked in vain through Italian galleries, two years after he was taken from us, for any full parallel to his dazzling beauty—a beauty not physical merely, but visibly radiating from the soul. His hair was of the finest and richest gold; 'the sunshine of picture' never glorified its equal; and the delicacy of his complexion at once fixed the attention of observers like the late N. P. Willis, who had traversed both hemispheres

without having his gaze arrested by any child who could bear a comparison with this one." He died of cholera in the summer of 1849, being ill only from one to five o'clock of "one of the hottest, and quite the longest day I have ever known." How many, alas! will understand this experience with which the father, after nearly twenty years, closes his narrative: "When at length the struggle ended with his last breath, and even his mother was convinced that his eyes would never again open on the scenes of this world, I knew that the summer of my life was over, that the chill breath of its autumn was at hand, and that my future course must be along the downhill of life."

Surely this glimpse of Horace Greeley, as the early brightness passed that day from his rugged and struggling path at the very meridian of his life, and that other spectacle as we last see him sitting, haggard and worn and heart-broken, at the deathbed of the wife of his youth, may well cause many of us to revise our estimate of the man, and to cherish a less harsh or unrelenting judgment of those things in his outward intercourse and his public life which may have irritated and prejudiced us.

It is pleasant to think that, during the last thirty years of his life, Horace Greeley enjoyed a number of "outings" which refreshed and

invigorated both mind and body,—we do not, of course, include his hurried lecture tours all over the country, not so much snatched from his other duties as added to and mingled with them, though these were a fruitful source of profit both to himself and his readers, and a partial variation of his incessant employment. Some of his sketches of adventure and misadventure in these tours are exceedingly entertaining, and illustrate the well-earned wages of a lecturer in that ante-railroad day across the Alleghanies, over the prairies, and even “Down-East,” amid floods and snow-storms, corduroy roads, break-neck haste to perform miracles of rapid transit, and not infrequent delay and failure in reaching appointments, not to speak of damp beds and ruinous diet. I cannot undertake to reproduce his travels, of which extensive memoranda have been left to us; but only in the briefest manner to recapitulate the most important of his tours and excursions, and at the same time illustrate the man by his way of looking at distant places and people, leaving to conjecture what may have been the effect of these experiences and observations upon the development of his own character and opinions. Meanwhile we take occasion to say that the sketches which he has left of his travels are by no means obsolete, but richly repay reading, as not only vivid pictures of the time,



but as mirrored in, and mirroring, one of the keenest and most independent observers of any age.

His earliest recorded tour was taken in 1842, the year after the founding of the *Tribune*, one of his chief objects being to visit the haunts of his youth and the present home of his parents in Pennsylvania. The trip took him to Washington for the first time, where his published criticism of distinguished men was often more acute than complimentary. At Mount Vernon he came fully under the spell of the "solemn and sublime repose of the mighty dead." At Niagara he records this bit of autobiographic reminiscence : " Years, though not many, have weighed upon me since first, in boyhood, I gazed from the deck of a canal-boat upon the distant cloud of white vapor which marked the position of the world's great cataract, and listened to catch the rumbling of its deep thunders. Circumstances did not then permit me to gratify my strong desire of visiting it ; and now, when I am tempted to wonder at those who live within a day's journey, yet live on through half a century without one glance at the mighty torrent, I am checked by the reflection that I myself passed within a dozen miles of it no less than five times before I was able to enjoy its magnificence."

In the spring of 1847 he took a trip to Lake

Superior to inspect some mining property in which he had invested, and from which all he ever realized was experience and "the conviction that 'big strikes' are as one to a million." Chicago was then "a smart and growing village;" Milwaukee consisted of "some three to four hundred new houses, clustered about a steamboat-landing at the mouth of a shallow and crooked creek;" "no mile of railroad terminated in Chicago." On his return he took boat from that place to New Buffalo (then designed to be the terminus of the Michigan Central Railroad); stage to Kalamazoo, where he struck a just completed section of the railroad, which carried him to Detroit; and thence homeward by steamboat to Buffalo, railroad to Albany, and steamboat to New York.

In 1859 he took a "journey of observation" to California, on his own account, with reference to a Pacific railroad which had been clearly, ever since the gold discoveries of 1848, "a national necessity," and an "imperative and inevitable" fact of the near future. He started alone on May 9th, and travelled rapidly *via* Cleveland, Chicago, Quincy, and the North Missouri Railroad to St. Joseph, thence dropping down the Missouri to Atchison, and traversing Kansas by Leavenworth and Wyandot to Osawatomie; thence visiting Lawrence and returning to Leavenworth, whence the Pike's

Peak stage carried him through Topeka and Fort Riley, to Junction City, then the Western outpost of civilization in that quarter.

We give his "descending ladder of civilization" :

*May 12th, Chicago.*—Chocolate and morning journals last seen on the hotel breakfast-table.

*23d, Leavenworth.*—Room-bells and bathtubs make their final appearance.

*24th, Topeka.*—Beef-steaks and wash-bowls (other than tin) last visible. Barber, ditto.

*26th, Manhattan.*—Potatoes and eggs last recognized among the blessings which "brighten as they take their flight." Chairs, ditto.

*27th, Junction City.*—Last visitation of a boot-black, with dissolving views of a board bedroom. Beds bid us good-by.

The narrative of his ride across the plains to Denver is exceedingly graphic and interesting, and, with all his records of travel in those pioneer days, will become more and more valuable as the wilderness blossoms and brings forth great cities and States in the coming years. Denver was then about six months old, with perhaps a hundred dwellings of hewn cottonwood logs without ground floors, and averaging ten feet square. The inhabitants were almost entirely males; the food was mainly bread, bacon, beans, coffee, and nettles, the last being boiled for greens, while "those who were not

particular as to diet could often buy a quarter of antelope'' brought in by an Indian ; whiskey, of course, was plentiful at a quarter of a dollar per glass. Bedsteads were rare conveniences, one of them nearly breaking his back by rough slats nearly a foot apart. The air was vocal with the curses, quarrelling, and revolvers of the blacklegs and ruffians. Being "shy by nature and meditative by habit," Mr. Greeley avoided the "hotel," preferring to study Western character out of pistol-shot, and sought seclusion in a deserted cabin, taking his meals at another cabin occupied by a widow, whose *ménage* is thus described : "She and her little son slept on a sort of shelf nearer the roof than the floor of her single room ; while two male boarders, waiting outside while she made her toilet, spread their blankets on the earth-floor of her tenement. At daylight they turned out, giving her a chance to dress, clear up, and get breakfast, which they duly returned to eat. Such was life in Denver in June, 1859."

He rode thence in an "ambulance" (or wagon with four mules) on the Overland Mail Route to Fort Laramie, seeing only four huts on the way, only one of them occupied. There was no white person living within fifty miles of Cheyenne. Thus traversing the old Oregon and California emigrant trail through the South

Pass of the Rocky Mountains, he burst upon "the city of the many-wived prophet, the capital of his sacerdotal and political empire, and the most conspicuous trophy of his genius and his power." Salt Lake City restored him to comfort and digestion. His impression of the Mormons was highly favorable, their uniform industry naturally commending them to his mind, which regarded idleness as the source, if not the sum, of all villainies; they were also "more pious (after their fashion) than any other people I ever visited." At Camp Floyd he dined with Albert Sidney Johnston, the commander of the post—"a grave, deep, able man, with a head scarcely inferior to Daniel Webster's"—whose death years after on the battlefield of Shiloh may have materially changed the fortunes of the rebellion.

We cannot further trace his journey to and across the Sierra Nevada, the Yosemite Valley and its then virgin wonders (than which he had seen ten years later "nothing at all comparable in awe-inspiring grandeur and sublimity"). The Big Trees of California, of course, claimed his special attention. At last our pilgrim arrived at San Francisco, worn out with his journey over arid stretches of desert, and sick with "ancient pork and hot saleratus bread," and the "unwholesome and detestable warm alka-

line water'' with which he had been forced to wash it down.

Horace Greeley's first visit to Europe was in 1851, chiefly to see the World's Fair at London, of which he was the representative of the United States as chairman of a jury—that embracing the general and extensive department of "hardware." His voyage in the Baltic was a rough and rainy one, and revealed the fact that he was almost as bad a sailor as his friend Henry Ward Beecher. He was "sick unto death's door for most of the time." The sea was always an "unloving acquaintance," and a sea voyage of twelve days "about equal to two months' hard labor in the State prison or to the average agony of five years on shore." . . . "he who shall teach us to vanquish seasickness will deserve to be honored and crowned as one of the greatest benefactors of the human race." The sights of London which chiefly impressed him were the fogs ("the thing called sun in England, when seen, bearing a nearer resemblance to a boiled turnip than to its American namesake"), the fuss and follies of court etiquette, and the sickening sight of want and degradation. This latter made him feel that he had hitherto "said too little, done too little, dared too little, sacrificed too little, to awaken attention to the infernal

wrongs and abuses which are inherent in the very structure and constitution, the nature and essence, of civilized society as it now exists throughout Christendom."

Among the notable men with whom he was thrown in London were Lord Canning, President of the Council of the Exposition, and afterward Governor-General of India during the Sepoy Rebellion, the Duke of Argyle, and the great Duke of Wellington. During that summer Mr. Greeley found time for a hasty run through France, Italy, Belgium, and a corner of Germany; also a trip northward to Scotland and Ireland. He "did" Paris in eight days, spending two of them, however, among the pictures of the Louvre; so also at Rome the larger part of his time was spent in the art galleries, his pleasure being tempered only by the thought of the vastly greater good which might be accomplished by the diffusion of all that wealth of beauty. He was pleased with the French, and thought the future of the Republic assured (it was only a few months before the usurpation of Louis Napoleon). He found "aristocracy a chronic disease nowhere except in England." In Ireland he found a girl of ten years breaking up stones of the brook for roads, at the rate of sixpence a cart-load, which took her a fortnight. This was a typical incident of his impressions, which he



closes with the words, "Alas ! unhappy Ireland."

It was during this visit to London that Mr. Greeley was invited before a Committee of Parliament, of which Richard Cobden was chairman, to give testimony concerning the newspaper press of America, the subject before them being the repeal of the stamp duty of a penny on every copy of a newspaper, and of the tax on advertisements. This testimony, which was evidently striking and impressive as well as influential, is given at length in Hudson's "Journalism in America," as "an interesting part of the history of the American Press."

Again, in 1855, Mr. Greeley went to Europe with his family, visiting the second World's Exposition at Paris. The six weeks spent in that city he pronounced, in 1868, "the nearest approach to leisure" he had known for thirty years. Again, the art exhibition in Paris especially interested him, and nothing so impressively as the pre-Raphaelite school of Holman Hunt, Millais, and others. Parisian life, however, he is sure would not be the thing either for his health or his happiness. He had no envy for "the pleasure-seeker who chases his nimble, coquettish butterfly, year in and year out, along the boulevards and around the 'places' of the giddy metropolis of France."

An amusing episode of his Parisian visit is entertainingly told in a chapter of his "Recollections" entitled, "Two Days in Jail." Some French exhibitor at the New York World's Fair in 1852-53 took occasion to serve a writ upon him one evening, in which he was sued for \$2500 as a director of the Fair. As imprisonment for debt was still the law in France, and as his prosecutor would not accept his security, he passed the night in Clichy Prison rather than have a row raised about it. It being Saturday night, he could not be released on legal showing till Monday morning, and as he refused to be bailed or bought out, he suffered his "durance vile" with his characteristic patience, which was so marked on real provocations and so lacking on slight ones. Sunday was quite a brilliant reception day—among his sympathizing visitors being the American Ambassador, John Y. Mason, Don Piatt, Secretary of Legation, Mrs. Piatt, Mr. Greeley's own family, Mr. Maunsell B. Field, M. Vattermare, and M. Hector Bossange, the publisher. Hon. E. B. Washburne, afterward Minister to France during the siege of Paris in the Franco-German War, was also at his side. His release was obtained through regular process of law on Monday morning, it being demonstrated to the court that he could not be held liable for the damage sustained by the exhibitor, backed

by the representation that the Americans were generally indignant at the outrage, and were threatening to leave Paris in a body if he were not promptly liberated. So he went back to his rented cottage, where he was met at the door by his little son, who rushed down-stairs with flying hair and radiant face, and who now *knew* what he had been told at the jail on the day before and had bravely tried to believe.

Horace Greeley's account of his Swiss journeys I happened to read at the same time as those of John Ruskin in his autobiography, "*Præterita*." The contrast of those aspects of scenery which attracted the two strongly marked men, and of their methods of expressing themselves, is an interesting psychological study. Never was there so strange a mixture as in the former, of sentiment, enthusiasm, and rhetoric, with agricultural and Census Bureau material. "He had," says Mr. Parton, "an eye for a picture and a prospect as well as for a potato-field and a subsoil plough." He actually did make, as one of his first observations in Italy, the remark that "he had never seen a region where a few subsoil ploughs, with men qualified to use and explain them, were so much wanted."

Mr. Greeley's letters, like all his writings, were always acute as well as refreshingly readable ;

yet it is due to him to add his own modest apology for them : “ I doubt not that my letters abounded in blunders and *gaucheries* which a riper knowledge, a better preparation for foreign travel, would have taught me to avoid. As it was, I wrote for a circle of readers of whom many were glad to look through my eyes because they *were* mine,—that is, because they were interested in knowing how Europe would impress me, and what I should find there to admire or to condemn. Had not this been the case—had I addressed readers to whom I was unknown or indifferent—I could not have deemed my letters worth their attention, nor likely to attract it.”

## CHAPTER XX.

### FRIENDS AND CO-LABORERS.

A MAN of such multifarious and public pursuits as Horace Greeley, and a leader in them all, could not fail to draw around him a very large circle of acquaintance and coadjutors. He was probably the best known man of his time in New York, if not throughout the country. He was accessible to everybody, free and easy in approaching everybody, and had a good memory for faces, names, and associations. His connection with politics and reforms, as both a spokesman and a moulder of opinion, made him a centre of counsel and inquiry. His position as an editor and journalist led to his employment, first and last, of a small army of co-laborers and assistants. His living so much in the street and on the highways of the land as a lecturer, campaign speaker, and a restless leader and indefatigable worker, gave him an enormous acquaintance. And acquaintance to him meant familiarity, and the utmost directness and unconventionality of intercourse. He rarely stopped for

preliminaries, but blurted out the thing which was uppermost in his mind, or as if resuming a conversation just interrupted for a moment. Mr. Barnum narrates the circumstance of meeting Mr. Greeley as he passed the door of his museum, after his own absence of nearly two years in Europe, and of extending his hand in great joy to greet him ; but the movement received no attention, and, as if they had parted only the day before, he opened the conversation with a remark about an incidental matter which had mutually concerned them at their last meeting as directors of the World's Fair. He troubled himself very little with "Mistering" people, but called them by their simple surnames, after the manner of school-fellows. He was, however, usually a genial and refreshing companion, with a joke or an anecdote always ready. His dry humor was as marked as Abraham Lincoln's, and he told his "little story" with a glee and enjoyment as great as his auditor's. His richly-stored memory and vast and varied information made his talk as instructive as it was entertaining. He managed to read all the books of the day, and could talk with intelligence and acumen about them. To enjoy him one must not expect or attempt "small talk," or mind the utmost bluntness. He could not flatter, if he had tried ; and he never did try. He could approach a noted

poetess with the words, "Mrs. —, I have just read a criticism on your writings in which you are greatly overrated ;" and could reply to another, who had asked whether he had read her last poem, "Madam, do you call that a poem?" And yet, somehow, he carried with him such an impression of simplicity and sincerity, and the absence of any design to wound the feelings, that he was usually taken in good part.

He keenly relished the company of a few congenial friends amid pleasant talk, reminiscence, badinage, anecdote—an hour or two of unrestrained intercourse—when he could find time for it. One of the most intimate of these has recorded that "it was a special pleasure to him to slip off with a friend to a quiet dinner in a quiet place after the bulk of his day's work was done (if it were ever done), and abandon himself for awhile to the novelty and luxury of having nothing to do. Then he was the most charming of companions, full of geniality, brightness, and humor," a capital listener, as well as talker, to those having anything to say. He was extremely fond of a game of euchre, as he had been of checkers in his youth. In fact, he played with the relish of a boy, for hours at a time, and with great glee when he could come off best. Of one of his fellow-workers, who had produced an especially brilliant edi-



torial, he said : " F—— can write better than I can, but I can beat him playing euchre !"

And yet Horace Greeley seems to have had few intimate and confidential friends, such as Goethe and Bunsen and Agassiz had. In fact, he had not a genius for friendship as distinct from companionship. And the secret is easy to find, not in a shallowness of nature, much less a selfish indifference, but in an expansiveness of passion and of interest which caused him to give his intensest devotion to man rather than men, to society rather than individuals. He was too tremendously in earnest for human improvement and social reform, to live for persons as the "lover and friend" must do. Beyond a certain point of earnestness in philanthropy we display the paradox of egotism. He was of too masterful a nature and too regardless of the small, sweet courtesies of life, too impatient of contradiction or delays, to transform co-laborers into friends, though there were marked differences among them in this respect ; in fact, these traits in too many instances transformed them into his worst enemies.

It was in the sphere of his association with those who co-operated with him that both his best and worst, his strongest and weakest points of character showed themselves. While some of these, like Mr. McElrath, George Rip-

ley, Bayard Taylor, James S. Pike and others, seem to have enjoyed uninterrupted relations of love and peace, others became bitterly alienated. He could hardly be called a "true yokefellow," but had always a bit of the old oxen-driver of Vermont, visiting upon the cattle somewhat of the impatience due to the stumps which he was striving to plough up. Independent and rival spirits like Raymond and Dana could not endure to purchase peace at the cost of subordination and submission, or at least of disregarding and humoring the enforcer of those virtues. And yet he was no more exacting of others than of himself. He shared their impecuniousness in the day of small things, and cordially acquiesced in, and even recommended their leaving for other establishments when they could do better. I find in all his relations with his employés nothing mean or selfish, as Henry J. Raymond and some of his friends seemed determined to impute to him. He was doubtless thoughtless and short-sighted in letting men drudge for him for inadequate reward, just as he felt himself wronged by those who accepted his political drudgery without decent recognition. His own unselfish and unworldly enthusiasm made the mistake of expecting the same disinterestedness from his subordinates and co-laborers as from himself. Perhaps he was not as care-

ful to show his appreciation of good work, as he was outspoken and impatient of bad—a too common fault. But we have on record enthusiastic outbursts expressing his sense of work by Whitelaw Reid, W. H. Fry, Charles A. Dana, George Ripley, Margaret Fuller, and others of that extraordinary group of persons whom he seemed to have a peculiar faculty of drawing about him, though not always the same happy faculty of retaining. It is remarkable how many of these men made their beginning with him, were discovered by him, and were advanced to high and effective positions, not seldom at his own loss. I used constantly in my college days to hear the praises of Horace Greeley chanted by a companion who had been picked out by him from the very dust and door-sill of the *Tribune* office in his boyhood, and put in the path of self-improvement and advancement in journalism, till now he ranks among our most respected and influential citizens.

So far as we can ascertain, Mr. Greeley's rare personal friendships were illustrated by his relations to his pastor, the Rev. Dr. E. H. Chapin, of New York, with whom his intercourse was entirely unreserved and unprofessional; Henry Ward Beecher, with whom he had much in common in largeness of nature, independence of mind, and in tenderness of

heart ; and P. T. Barnum, whose ecclesiastical associations brought them much into contact, and whose oddities and self-control and practical kindness must have made his society a refreshment to one so nervous, and so alive alike to the humorous and the kindly. Barnum's introduction to him was the result of an offer of Greeley to bet on an election, at the same time borrowing the money to do so. "From that time," says the genial showman, "Mr. Greeley and I became warm personal friends." The interview took place, by the way, in the office of the *Christian Messenger*, the organ of their religious denomination. It illustrates Greeley's keen interest in politics as a game, for we have no indication of a gambling spirit, much less of greed to make politics lucrative in any way. It illustrates also how far his ideas of morality had relaxed from the Scotch-Irish and Puritan standards of his ancestry. It is curious to think what the great mass of his rural constituents of that day would have thought of this bet, as of his profanity and other peccadilloes.

His relations with Margaret Fuller deserve special mention, he having himself devoted a whole chapter of his "Recollections" to her. She was first brought to his attention, and ultimately to a place in his household and a position on the *Tribune*, by the partiality of his

wife, who had met her in Boston. He considered her at that time "the best instructed woman in America" and "physically one of the least enviable—a prey to spinal affection, nervous disorder, and protracted, fearfully torturing headaches." He always vividly remembered his first half hour's conversation with this extraordinary *improvvisatrice*. Her appearance was unprepossessing, and even repelling, so that he said to himself, "We shall never get far." He says: "I believe I fancied her too much interested in personal history; and her talk was a comedy in which dramatic justice was done to everybody's foibles. I remember that she made me laugh more than I liked, for I was at that time an eager scholar of ethics, and had tasted the sweets of solitude and stoicism, and I found something profane in the hours of amusing gossip into which she drew me; and when I returned to my library had much to think of the crackling of thorns under a pot." Another thing which was hard for him to palliate was her bondage to moods and nerves, so that she was incapable of incessant or even regular labor. She did not come up to his conception of a strong-minded woman, and an assertor of woman's rights. She required attendance and care. "She would evidently have been happier amid other and more abundant furniture than graced our dwelling;

and, while nothing was said, I felt that a richer and more generous diet than ours would have been more accordant with her tastes and wishes."

But ere long he learned to appreciate not only her intellectual superiority, her magnetic attraction for those of her own sex, and the almost universal confidence which low and high reposed in her. She won his heart by her love and helpfulness to his darling "Pickie." Above all, he found her a kindred spirit in her sympathy with social reform, and in her personal endeavor to befriend and uplift the very outcasts of society. In concluding his fine tribute to her memory, by an account of her tragic and self-devoted death, he says: "So passed away the loftiest, bravest soul that has yet irradiated the form of an American woman." On the other hand, she gave not only her admiration to Mr. Greeley, but her personal affection. "I like him, nay more, love him. He is, in his habits, a plebeian; in his heart, a nobleman. His abilities, in his own way, are great. He believes in mine to a surprising extent. We are true friends."

Mr. Greeley's relations with the two maiden sisters, Alice and Phœbe Cary, was an interesting one. He was a frequent visitor at their humble though hospitable home—one of the chief lions of their modest *salon*. He was al-

ways gentle and kindly and helpful to them. He was one of the pall-bearers at the funeral of Alice, who was the most prolific writer of the two, though for a long time a suffering invalid. Phœbe was four years and a half younger, but died within a few months of her sister. She did not write as much, perhaps because she was the Martha of the little household, and her poems, though, perhaps, more original and spirited than Alice's, were never quite as popular. Mr. Greeley was prepared for the death of the elder sister, saying as he stood by her coffin (she was then fifty-one years old): "Alice has lived to a reasonable age; it is about the proper time for her to die." At Phœbe's funeral, however, he was not at all resigned. "Now, that girl," he said, "had full twenty-five years more in her; she had no business to die at this time of life. There is something about it I cannot understand." It was the final breaking up of one of the few spots on earth where love and gentle forbearance always awaited him, and where his tired spirit could rest.

Mr. Greeley was peculiarly fortunate in his relations with his business partner, Mr. McElrath, who took Greeley's cares entirely from his shoulders, and never criticised him for what he must often have regarded as extravagance or bad policy. They have been called the Da-



mon and Pythias of a perfect partnership, and Mr. Parton says, amid the many discordant unions of the world, "Oh, that every Greeley could find his McElrath! and blessed is the McElrath that finds his Greeley!"

Somewhat the same testimony is given of Mr. George M. Snow, a genial and gentlemanly man of Mr. Greeley's own age, who conducted the financial department for more than twenty-two years from the beginning, when his health failed. Mr. Parton describes him as an elegant and rather *distingué* gentleman, with a small black Albert mustache. Old Solon Robinson is picturesquely sketched as "like a good-humored prophet Isaiah, or a high-priest in undress," compiling a column of paragraphs on the drought and the potato crop.

Among the many journalists of eminence who were employed and developed by the *Tribune* were such names as Ripley, Dana, Raymond, Parton, Park Benjamin, Bayard Taylor, George W. Smalley, Zebulon White, W. H. Fry, John Russell Young, J. R. S. Hassard, Sidney Howard Gay, James S. Pike, Junius Henri Browne, Colonel John Hay, Whitelaw Reid, William Winter, Solon Robinson, F. J. Ottarson, R. H. Hildreth, George M. Snow, G. G. Foster, Joseph Howard, Amos Cumming, Theodore Tilton, Charles Nordhoff, George W. Bungay, Albert Richard-

son, Fanny Fern, and Margaret Fuller. Messrs. Dana, Gay, Young, and Reid were successively the managing editors ; Messrs. Smalley, Taylor, White, and Howard have been conspicuous as correspondents ; Messrs. Hassard, Fry, and Winter have been art critics. Robinson was agricultural editor, Ottarson the city editor, and Snow commercial editor ; Parton was an "inspired reporter" and Mr. Greeley's biographer, and Raymond was probably the most versatile and effective journalist ever connected with the New York press.

George Ripley was the "father of literary criticism in the American press." He introduced real reviewing as distinguished from the "book notice," but with a combination of the scholarly and popular which had not yet been attempted. He gave his whole energy to it, and made an era in the literary part of journalism. So wide and catholic and learned was his mind that his reviews extended over all departments, from religion, philosophy, science, and politics to history, biography, poetry, and fiction. His patience was inexhaustible ; his persistency was prodigious. He would sit in his chair all day long, reading and writing, unconscious of fatigue, insensible to annoyance, heedless even of interruption, never complaining of over-pressure, piercing the heart of a volume with a glance, and throwing off page

after page of manuscript with an ease of touch which betokened the trained mind as well as the practised hand. "Anything but apathy," was his motto. He certainly was not dominated by "filthy lucre." His salary at first (1849) was only five dollars a week, was raised to ten dollars in the latter part of that year, and was fixed at twenty-five dollars in 1851, where it continued till 1861. That year he received thirty dollars, and from January, 1866, to 1871, the sum of fifty dollars, and thence till his death seventy-five dollars a week. He is described as "a stout gentleman of eight-and-forty, of sound digestion and indomitable good-humor, who enjoys life and helps others enjoy it, and believes that anger and hatred are seldom proper and never 'pay.' " His relations with Mr. Greeley were of the most uniform harmony, friendship, and mutual appreciation; and his tributes, both in the press and on the platform, to his old leader are among the most loving as well as discriminating that we have.

Mr. Bayard Taylor owed his start in life and literary fame to Mr. Greeley's employment of him, then a type-setter, at a good price for his "Views Afoot," though he was obliged to sometimes supplement his pay by working at his trade on the way. Mr. Taylor was more or less connected with the *Tribune* during his

life, and was one of Mr. Greeley's closest friends among his co-laborers. He thus appears in the editorial rooms of the *Tribune* in 1854: "His countenance has quite lost the Nubian bronze with which it darkened on the banks of the White Nile, as well as the japaning which his last excursion gave it. Pale, delicate-featured, with a curling beard and a subdued mustache, slight in figure, and dressed with care, he has little the aspect of an adventurous traveller, and as much the air of a nice young gentleman as can be imagined. He may read in peace, for he is not now one of the hack-horses of the daily press."

Mr. William H. Fry, besides being an extensive writer and authorized critic on music—having composed the rather successful opera of *Leonora*—was accounted the "sledge-hammer," thunderer, and sham-demolisher of the editorial columns. Mr. Parton describes him as "a tall, pale, intense-looking gentleman," thinking out his work as he slowly paced the editorial sanctum; "one of the noblest fellows alive, a hater of meanness and wrong, a lover of man and right, with a power of expression equal to the intensity of his hate and the enthusiasm of his love." The same graphic hand gives us a pen-picture of Mr. Charles A. Dana, the managing editor: "In figure, face, and flowing beard, he looks enough like Louis Kos-

suth to be his cousin, if not his brother. As befits his place, he is a gentleman of peremptory habits. It is his office to *decide*; and as he is called upon to perform the act of decision a hundred times a day, he has acquired the power both of deciding with despatch and of announcing his decision with civil brevity. If you desire a plain answer to a plain question, Charles A. Dana is the man who can accommodate you. He is an able and, in description, a brilliant writer, a good speaker, fond and proud of his profession, indefatigable in the discharge of its duties; when out of harness, agreeable as a companion; in harness, a man not to be interrupted."

Mr. Dana appears first as an active and resident member of the Brook Farm Community. On its failure, both he and Ripley naturally drifted into the *Tribune*, about 1846. He took part in the foreign department at twelve dollars a week, being an accomplished linguist, and of large acquaintance with European events and movements. It was at this time that the two men jointly edited for the Appletons *The New American Cyclopædia*. Erelong Dana was made managing editor, and his services were highly appreciated, and regarded as almost indispensable by Mr. Greeley. In 1848 he went to Ireland to study and write letters upon the disorders and revolution there. During Mr.

Greeley's canvass for United States Senator, Mr. Dana went to Albany to electioneer for his chief.

These two decided men got on together with considerable friction at times, and with no small exercise of forbearance on Mr. Dana's (and perhaps on Mr. Greeley's) part, till their differences concerning the war policy of the Administration brought about a rupture in 1862, resulting in Dana's withdrawal and appointment as Assistant Secretary of War under Stanton. Whatever alienation or rivalry may have existed during Mr. Greeley's life, it is evident that these men thoroughly prized each other; and no estimates of the *Tribune* editor, since his death, have been more appreciative as well as discriminating than that of the editor of the *Sun*. And there have been recent indications that time and the silence of separation have greatly softened, if not obliterated, in the survivor's mind the traces of that later severance from the friend and co-laborer of early days.

Mr. Dana, in 1867, tells of his introduction to Henry J. Raymond more than twenty years before "in a lumbered and dusty attic, No. 30 Ann Street, New York," that attic being the editorial office of the *Tribune*, and Mr. Greeley being the introducer. He well remembered that first meeting. "We sat down together and at once plunged into a long talk on Ger-



man philosophy and metaphysics, for we were both younger and nearer our college days at that time than we are at present." In fact, Mr. Raymond was just out of college, when, in 1840, he called upon Horace Greeley, for whose *New Yorker* he had already written some noticeable sketches. He was glad to accept the post of assistant editor of the *New Yorker* on a salary of eight dollars a week, with the understanding, on Mr. Greeley's part, that he need only retain it till he could get something better. Indeed, Raymond had offered to give his attendance at the office to be of any service, and did so, until a considerable amount of literary and miscellaneous work fell into his swift and skilful hands. In three weeks' time his value had been discovered, and the eight dollars was offered to slightly outbid an offer of \$400 a year for school-teaching in the South. So low were the *Tribune's* resources at the time, that nothing but a sense of the young man's indispensableness could have induced so prodigal an offer. When Mr. Greeley established the *Tribune*, in 1841, Raymond was carried over into the first-assistant editorship as a matter of course and of seeming necessity. In his "Recollections" Mr. Greeley pays this tribute to his young co-laborer, which that gentleman pronounced as "especially grateful," and as "generous appreciation": "I had not much



for him to do till the *Tribune* was started ; then I had enough ; and I never found another person, barely of age and just from his studies, who evinced so signal and such versatile ability in journalism as he did. Abler and stronger men I may have met ; a cleverer, readier, more generally efficient journalist I never saw. . . . He is the only assistant with whom I ever felt required to remonstrate for doing more work than any human brain and frame could be expected long to endure. His salary was, of course, gradually increased from time to time ; but his services were more valuable in proportion to their cost than those of any one else who ever aided me on the *Tribune*."

It was in the latter sentence that the earliest alleged grievance of Mr. Raymond was afterward declared to have been,—that advantage had been taken of his modesty and disposition to drudge, and that the propositions to advance his salary were left to his own initiative. This is certainly not in accordance with Mr. Greeley's nature, nor with many other well-known facts of his relations with employés ; and yet there was probably a lack of observation and of consideration. At length from overwork (to eke out his living by extra earnings) and by exposure at night as a reporter, Raymond fell ill. On a visit from his employer he was asked, " When will you be well enough

to come back?" "Never," was the reply, "on the salary you paid me." On being asked how much he wanted, he named twenty dollars a week, which was rather protestingly granted. This sort of transaction seems to have been too often rehearsed in dealing with employes. The time came—in less than three years—when Raymond received an offer from the *Courier and Enquirer*, which Greeley did not consider himself able to afford, and therefore generously acquiesced and even recommended his transference.

He was now thrown into a totally different and bitterly prejudiced circle of journalism, and was speedily set up to combat his former employer in a personal newspaper duel on Fourierism. Journalistic rivalry and ambition were stimulated, and he was drawn under political influences which saw in him and in his availability the material to replace their failing hold upon Mr. Greeley himself.

We do not propose nor desire to enter into the details of this growing alienation and bitterness. It can now be seen, by impartial minds, to have been due to incompatibility of the men to understand or make allowance for one another; to their paths which lay directly across each other's; to the inherent weakness, egotism, impatience, and uncharitableness of human nature, and the "whispering tongues that poison

truth." Both Charles A. Dana and Henry J. Raymond were as masterful and independent men as Horace Greeley. The latter was fitly styled "the Little Napoleon of the Press" in this respect, as well as for his ambition. Mr. Dana was too different, and Mr. Raymond was too like himself to be compatible with him. There were certain kinds of men, in fact, with whom he could not get on ; those who, being made for "bosses" themselves, could not submit to it in others ; men of high temper like himself ; men who did not meet his candor, simplicity, and devotedness with a like return ; and men whom he thought wanted to *use* him for their own selfish ends. We shall see some of these points still further exemplified presently. Oh, if men would only look at each other in the heats of life as they are constrained to do in the shadow of death ! The following was the tribute paid to Mr. Raymond in the *Tribune* on the morning after his untimely death : " He was often misjudged. . . . Genial, unassuming, and thoroughly informed by study, observation, and travel, Mr. Raymond was a delightful companion, and his society was widely courted and enjoyed. . . . His death makes a void which will not easily be filled."

Horace Greeley had only two political loves in his life (unless we include his " young love's

dream" for the brilliant and magnetic William Wirt), and to these he gave an enthusiasm and devotion rarely equalled. The first of these—his "Harry Clay"—we have already spoken of. In one of his lectures he styles him as "the eagle-eyed and genial-hearted living master-spirit of our time." And if any one image, outside of his boy and his immediate family, was imprinted on his heart in death, it was that of this splendid and fascinating man. Equally loyal-hearted and almost servilely devoted was he to William H. Seward during the years in which the New York politician was growing up to the stature of a national statesman. It was this "Seward" clique which had given him his first start in journalism by employing him for campaign papers, and he duly appreciated it. For nearly twenty years he gave his utmost toil and talents to the cause which they led. He had no ambition but Mr. Seward's advancement; he had no rule but Thurlow Weed's "advice." Their affiliation was such that they were known as the firm of Seward, Weed & Greeley. But the time came when he saw (or thought he saw) with sudden and dazzling clearness, that he was dealing with selfish and crafty men who were taking advantage of his single-mindedness and enthusiasm without gratitude or appreciation. The ox was expected to grind in the mill

without his portion of the meal. Acknowledgments of service were made on every hand from the party managers, but he was left out, or offered what it was a humiliation to accept ; and he expressed his hurt and humiliated and long-repressed feelings in a letter to Seward on November 11th, detailing his grievances and formally dissolving the aforesaid political firm.

This letter remained private, except from Mr. Seward's particular friends, until after his defeat for the Presidential nomination. At length the constant and virulent attacks of the *Courier* and the *Times* became so full of charges and insinuations based upon it, that Mr. Greeley demanded its publication. A reply was published by Mr. Weed in his cool and plausible style, in which he attempts but slight denial of Mr. Greeley's allegations of neglect, but expresses the utmost amazement that he should never have suspected these feelings and aspirations in the junior member of the firm, supposing that Horace Greeley cared only for journalistic success and the realization of his philanthropic dreams,—a thing incredible that the contrary should not have suggested itself to such students of human nature and distributors of spoils, at least so far as to lead them to ascertain whether any, and what, favors would be congenial and gratifying. He is certain that this political ambition must have been

a plant of later growth, and appeals, as it were, from Greeley drunk with the greed of spoils and office to Greeley the whilom babe and philosopher, "far above the 'swell-mob' of office-seekers." At any rate, the mistake was an unfortunate one for the Warwick of American politics, who could make any one else the candidate for President, except the one man to whose elevation his life was devoted, but whose political firm was not only "dissolved," but forever bankrupt.

Mr. Greeley, however, insists that his personal relations with Mr. Seward were wholly unchanged by it. "We met frequently and cordially after it was written, and we very freely conferred and co-operated during the long struggle in Congress for Kansas and free labor. He understood as well as I did that my position with regard to him, though more independent than it had been, was nowise hostile, and that I was really as ready to support his advancement as that of any other statesman, whenever my judgment should tell me that the public good required it." Again, he says, in 1868: "Apart from politics I liked the man, though not blind to his faults. His natural instincts were humane and progressive. . . . Few public men of his early prime were better calculated to attract and fascinate young men of his own party." He enumer-

ates Seward's faults : " A tendency to prodigality and lavish expenditure in government ; a rooted dislike to opposing a project or bill whereby any of his attached friends are to profit ; and, conceited as we all are, I think most men exceed him in the art of concealing from others their overweening faith in their own sagacity and discernment." Mr. Thurlow Weed is described as " of coarser mould and fibre,—tall, robust, dark-featured, shrewd, resolute, and not over-scrupulous, keensighted, though not far-seeing. Writing slowly and with difficulty, he was for twenty years the most sententious and pungent writer of editorial paragraphs on the American press. In pecuniary matters he was generous to a fault when poor ; he is said to be less so since he became rich, but I am no longer in a position to know. I cannot doubt, however, that if he had never seen Wall Street or Washington, had never heard of the Stock Board, and had lived in some yet undiscovered country where legislation is never bought or sold, his life would have been more blameless, useful, and happy."

But these are not pleasant things to think about such men, though they must be said if we would be true to these men as they were, or as they looked out upon one another. It is the part of eulogium and elegiac verse or ora-



tory to present ideals ; it is the part of biography to uncover the real, concealing naught, but putting down naught in malice. Let us not judge, then, but content ourselves with setting over the grave of our hero a little signboard with these two warnings : (1) Let the shoemaker stick to his last, and the editor stick to his type and quill. (2) Defend me from my friends ; I will defend myself from my enemies.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS.

HORACE GREELEY was as unique and unconventional a personality as Dr. Johnson, if not Neander and John Randolph, alike in appearance, manners, habits, and qualities of mind and character. He was a rough block of New England granite, whose shaping was that of hard knocks rather than fine chiselling, and who came as near as any one could to a "self-made man" in the best and fullest sense of the term. In early boyhood he gave the same impression of abstraction as in after life,—rarely saluting those whom he met, walking for miles along the zigzag of the fences without once looking up, and often taken by strangers for a "natural" and a "tow-headed fool." Here is the description of him by an eye-witness, as he came to Poultney at fifteen years of age: "A remarkably plain-looking, unsophisticated lad, with a slouching, careless gait, leaning away forward as he walked, as if both his head and his heels were too heavy for his body. He wore on the back of his head a wool hat of the

old stamp, with so small a brim that it looked more like a two-quart measure inverted than a hat. His trousers were exceedingly short and voluminous ; his shoes were of the kind called ' high-lows ' and much worn down ; he wore no stockings, and his homespun clothes were cut with an utter disregard of elegance or fit, and he had a singular whining voice that provoked the merriment of the older apprentices." His voice always had this high key and nasal tone, though the habit of public speaking and the giving of orders to other men developed it into a clear and commanding and not unpleasant quality. The boys nicknamed him " the ghost," in allusion to his long, white hair and the peculiar fairness of his complexion, and they played all manner of tricks upon him in accordance with that character.

His portraits give a very perfect idea of his countenance, especially that appended to his " Recollections " from a photograph by Brady ; Ritchie's is handsomer, but wears an unwontedly sour expression. His face was a singularly beautiful one, whether for his delicacy of feature, or the habitual look of purity and kindliness which it wore. This look of simplicity was increased by his habit of keeping his eyes partly closed, as if dazzled by the light, the conspicuousness of his spectacles, and the whiteness of his eyebrows, which made

him look almost as if he had none. His head was bald at the top, but his face was encircled by a fringe of snow (or tow) white hair, standing to all quarters of the compass, and chiefly exuberant under his chin, or rather on his throat. A superficial observer might call his a "moon-face," but a closer study would find in the cut of the nose, the set of the mouth, and the very close of the eyes, and the whole *pose* of the face, especially when looking down at you on addressing him, that which revealed a capacity for almost impudent independence and blunt belligerency ; there was, too, a strange mingling of the searching and shrewd with the far-away and childlike in his look, which was a dial-plate of the man's contrasted traits. So was it of his gait. He had the face of an angel and the walk of a clod-hopper. Yet it was not the gait of mere awkwardness, much less of mental vacancy. He seemed to be working himself along by his shoulders, and in a side-long way, as a determined man will press his way through a crowd. "Near-sighted, long-limbed, with head and members that seem on ill terms with the main body to which they belong, his shambling gait does no justice, however, to the philosopher."

Though I had no personal acquaintance with Mr. Greeley in my youth, I saw him in the *Tribune* office raising a dust wherever he went

in his tireless industry and peering oversight, bustling about on election night as the very genius of statistics, sitting at his dinner at Windust's, at mass-meetings, anniversaries, and on the lecture platform, as well as frequently on the streets, where his presence was felt and his face and form familiar to all New Yorkers. One of the most vivid recollections of those days was my meeting him at the most select hour of the afternoon in Broadway near Houston Street, which was then the most central part of that fashionable promenade. He was pushing and shuffling along uptown—I think on the wrong side of the pavement—in his usual rig, with hat on the back of his head, and pantaloons legs awry, paying no attention to anybody, and carrying and almost trailing a great market basket in his hand. I presume he was hurrying home to Chappaqua, and had bought the basket on his way. He must have presented a strange figure in Europe, particularly in Paris. Very possibly the English took him for the typical American in dress and manners, come at last! He would have been an odd figure in the White House, and we may conjecture how he would have looked and acted in the seat of the courtly Washington, or the gracious and silvery-tongued Van Buren, or the reserved and dignified Buchanan. And we should not fail to keep in view, when judg-

ing the apparent neglect of his political friends to put him in high office, a sense of incongruity which they may almost unconsciously have felt, and a secret apprehension lest he should give in courteous and official circles a certain scarecrow effect, or prove to be somehow the bull in the china shop.

Horace Greeley's dress deserves a separate treatment. In his village life in Vermont his wardrobe in summer consisted of a shirt and trousers, the former open in front and with tucked-up sleeves, and the latter very short. In walking the streets he added a straw hat, and at the debating society he put on a jacket. When he came to New York, we are told that men stared at him in the streets, for he still wore the above dress or want of dress, until the November cold compelled him to "turn over a new leaf." One evening he appeared in the printing-office so transmogrified, that his companions did not at first recognize him. They saw before them "a tall gentleman dressed in a complete suit of faded broadcloth, and a shabby, over-brushed beaver hat, from beneath which depended long and snowy locks; the garments were fashionably cut; the coat was in the style of a swallow's tail; the figure precisely that of an old gentleman who had seen better days. It was a second-hand suit, worn thin, washed in blackened water and

ironed smooth, bought for five dollars of a Chat-ham Street Jew. Horace seemed really to be vain of his new apparel.

The fact is, Horace Greeley had no sense of dress, and seemed unconscious of what he wore or of its grotesque and abnormal character, and his attempts to improve his appearance were quite as apt to impair it, and make the matter worse. Clothes were clothes to him. He utterly lost sight of them in the men underneath them. Clothes could not be made to set well on him,—what with his breakdown gait, his sidelong walk, and the way of wearing his hat. Prosperity brought no real improvement. He paid enough for dress, but somehow the result was always the same uncouth, ill-fitting, and shabby effect. It puzzled himself. “I don’t see,” he exclaimed, after the above incident in the printing-office, “why *I* should be such a curious-looking fellow.” He really believed himself a very well dressed man, and that few men of his station were better clad. He was sensitive on the subject of dress, and was twitted all his life about his clothes. His sensitiveness showed itself on one occasion, when one of his sub-editors suggested a change in his necktie, which was one of his weakest points, and he turned upon his critic with the words: “You don’t like my dress and I don’t like your de-



portment. If you have any improvements to make, please begin at home."

What a skilful tailor might have done for Mr. Greeley we should not undertake to say, but he seems to have got his clothes by the pitchfork method out of a heap of ready-made garments, and to have taken whatever was thrust upon him ; often they were bought for him by his wife. In dressing in the morning he was apt to put on whatever came first, and a friend of ours who occupied a neighboring room has testified to seeing him issue forth with his cravat tied at the side of his neck. He wore a dress-coat repeatedly in the street of a morning, and appeared in any kind of vestment at formal dinners. He had no more sense of comfort than of taste in dress. Mr. Barnum, at whose house he stayed for some time, noticed that he wore a pair of thick-soled cowhide boots, and begged him to substitute a pair of slippers on coming in, and also to slip on one of his loose dressing-gowns ; but he seemed quite unable to see the advantage.

There have been attempts to deny, or greatly abate, the sartorial defects of Horace Greeley, but the testimonies are too numerous and unanimous. Besides my own vision of him on Broadway, a clerical friend contributes the following : He had occasion to be at the Bible House in New York at some gathering one

morning, and on leaving discovered that his hat had been taken and another left in its place—a badly used silk high hat, with the rim turned up before and behind. His residence was in Jersey City, and he hesitated for some time before he ventured to go forth on his way home. But haply he met on the stairs going down a white hat on the head of Horace Greeley, who then must have had a room in the building, while he worked on his history of the Rebellion. The sight of it reconciled my friend to venture over the river with his no more disreputable headpiece. But on reaching his house, he was greeted by his family with the general chorus: “Where in the world did you get that hat? You look like a Jew peddler!”

Let it not, however, be supposed that he was anything more than careless in the choice and hang of his clothes. He was scrupulously neat in his habits, and had a passion for the bath. His linen was spotless, his cowhide boots well “shined,” his face carefully shaven, and his hands delicately kept. He had the good breeding never to speak of his clothes except when stung by the ill-breeding of others. And, above all, it was a cornerstone in his social platform:

“What tho’ on hamely fare we dine,  
Wear hoddin-grey, and a’ that;  
Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine,  
A man’s a man for a’ that.

For a' that, and a' that,  
Their tinsel show and a' that :  
The honest man, tho' e'er sae poor,  
Is king o' men for a' that."

Mr. Greeley's social manners were the embodiment of *gaucherie*—as ill-fitting as his clothes and as uncouth as his appearance. It is hard to tell whether he most gave the impression of not feeling at his ease, or of feeling too much at his ease,—probably both were true of him, as is often the case. His general demeanor in society was going about with a good-natured stare, like a rustic in a country fair. At a private parlor-reading of a beautiful and accomplished young lady of our acquaintance, he made his appearance in the midst of the performance, pushed his way to the front and stood during the entire time almost under her eyelids, staring straight at her and dividing the attention of the hearers, if not embarrassing the reader. It was well meant, for she was a great favorite of his, and this was his way of showing his admiration for her and for her talent.

His indifference to etiquette seemed at times almost like defiance. We know of his deliberately taking off his boots at a tea-party, on arriving out of the rain, and putting up his blue yarn stockinged feet to the fender to dry. Mr. Parton tells the story of another tea-party

at which Mr. Greeley did not appear till after the meal was over. On arriving he rushes into a discussion on the topic uppermost in his mind—the currency—utterly ignoring or brushing aside the hostess's repeated appeals to him to "take some tea." "Take a cruller, any way," she said, handing him a cake-basket full of those peculiarly hearty and indigestible delicacies. Mr. Parton's account is too graphic to be condensed or paraphrased. "The expounder of the currency, dimly conscious that a large object was approaching him, puts forth his hands, still vehemently talking, and takes not a cruller but the cake-basket and deposits it in his lap. The company are inwardly convulsed, and some of the weaker members retire to the adjoining apartment, the expounder continuing his harangue unconscious of their emotion or its cause. Minutes elapse. His hands in their wandering through the air, come in contact with the topmost cake, which they take and break. He begins to eat ; and eats and talks, talks and eats, till he has finished a cruller. Then he feels for another and eats that, and goes on slowly consuming the contents of the basket till the last crumb is gone. The company look on amazed, and the kind lady of the house fears for the consequences. She had heard that cheese is an antidote to indigestion. Taking the empty cake-basket

from his lap she silently puts a plate of cheese in its place, hoping that instinct will guide his hand aright. The experiment succeeds. Gradually the blocks of white, new cheese disappear. She removes the plate. No ill consequences follow. Those who saw this sight are fixed in the belief that Mr. Greeley was not then, nor afterward, aware that on that evening he partook of sustenance."

It was on this benevolent hypothesis of absent-mindedness that Mr. Barnum apologizes for his friend's conduct on introducing him to his daughter, who had sought the honor with much eagerness. "He looked at her, passed his eyes down as far as her feet and up again to her face, but made no motion of recognition. Caroline (most naturally) felt mortified, and said afterward, 'Well, father, that was the most curious introduction I ever had to any person. What was the man thinking about?'" This incident alike illustrates, and, in some measure, accounts for his manners. Who that ever saw him cannot imagine that benevolent stare, not overlooking the pleasing fact of his friend's daughter, but overlooking his own call to express his interest in the conventional way?

Mr. Greeley's "table manners" were peculiarly infelicitous. His first appearance in this *rôle* is described by a gentleman, afterward distinguished, who happened to see him at dinner

at the Poultney hotel, "a tall, pale, white-haired, gawky lad, in his shirt-sleeves," and "eating with a rapidity and awkwardness that I never saw equalled before or since. It seemed as if he were eating for a wager, and had gone in to win. He neither looked up nor around, nor appeared to pay the least attention to the conversation." This wonderful performance actually occupied our informant so that he ate little himself, marvelling such a fellow should be admitted to that company, which comprised several of the notabilities of the region. What was his increased amazement when one of these worthies (the sheriff) referred a matter in dispute, relating to the vote in an early Congress on some measure, to "the unaccountable boy," saying, "Ain't that right, Greeley?" "No," was the reply, without looking up, "you're wrong." "There," said his opponent (an ex-member of Congress), "I told you so." "And you're wrong, too," said the "still-devouring Mystery." "Then," goes on the gentleman to say, "he laid down his knife and fork, and gave the history of the measure, explained the state of parties at the time, stated the vote in dispute, named the leading advocates and opponents of the bill, and, in short, gave a complete exposition of the whole matter,"—all of which was received as a political gospel or a reference to the dictionary.



It must not be inferred that Mr. Greeley was a *gourmand*, however greedy an appearance he might present. Abstraction of mind was quite as likely to rob him of his meal as to cause excess. It was quite common for him, in the busy days of his life as a boss-printer, if not later, to look up from his work and ask whether he had been to dinner, to which he got such reply as the spirit of mischievous journeymen saw fit to give, and acted accordingly. The table did not always draw forth the genial currents of his soul, or unstop the iced decanters of his conversation. A clerical friend of mine is wont to give his sole contribution to Horace Greeley's table-talk, when on some social occasion he was "all ears," with youthful veneration and enthusiasm, to catch the words of wit and wisdom. The only remark, of the meagre feast of reason and flow of soul, which has left any impression on his memory was, "That's — good corn!" or words to that effect.

Not that he could not be delightful and racy in conversation, as well as brilliant and singularly instructive. As a friend has said, he could talk away the impression of his clothes, his unconventionality, and even of his rudeness, in a short time. For his was a more than negative sin against the social proprieties. We need not recur to examples already given of his *brusquerie* and bluntness of speech, which was often insult,



and was only tolerated by those who took him as he was, and believed in the benevolence of heart which lay back of the ungracious or rude demeanor. Bores found no quarter at his hands, and your commonplace remarks were very apt to receive anything but conventional replies. When enraged his vituperation was unrestrained, though the cooler language of his pen was at times fully equal to it.

We need not make heavy draughts upon our charity to account for, if not excuse, all this. It came from the very same cause which led him, at the committee meetings on the World's Fair (as related by one of the directors), although always the first on the ground, invariably to fall asleep. He was a frightfully overwrought man, and his nerves were in a state of perpetual strain. So long as he could drop asleep at any moment, his vigorous frame endured. But when the habit of abstraction caused by continuous brooding and worriment on the subject of the hour had produced its fruits of irritability and pessimistic alarms, the awful brain-consumption of insomnia soon brought down the shattered house of life to its untimely ruins.

A few other of Horace Greeley's habits may be adverted to, in an honest attempt to portray the man. In his very boyhood he illus-

trated his New England origin, as well as foreshadowed his personal future, by his incessant occupation and his tendency to make little earnings for himself by small savings and much work. It was from no love for money in itself, but for what it could buy, most of it going for books. Nor had he the "Yankee" love or aptitude for trade. All through life his dollars were squarely earned by labor, and those lost were by "trade." At the same time, he never worked with reference to pecuniary returns. His salary could only be increased against his consent, and as a *Tribune* stockholder he invariably voted against declaring dividends, preferring to have all earnings go to the improvement of the paper. He would say in reference to outside opportunities, as Professor Agassiz did, "I have no time to make money, and I don't want any, anyhow; money is more trouble than it's worth."

Rigidly economical himself, and always with money in hand, and having a horror of debt, and abounding in advice to young men to pursue strict business habits, he was the prince of money-lenders in the Scripture sense of lending and hoping for nothing again (Luke 6:35). It was as much a foible of his as were his clothes. In his most straitened apprentice days, an old memorandum-book of one of his companions contains numerous entries of un-

cancelled "borrowings" of and "owings" to "Horace Greeley" for small sums. He advanced to a dissipated young man, through a term of years, something like \$15,000 in small "loans," knowing that his father would never repay the money. During the first twenty years of his editorship of the *Tribune*, he is estimated by one of his most intimate friends to have "advanced some \$50,000 to the miscellaneous public on the worthless pledge of its word." He tried to hide the extent of his weakness by saying: "I don't give much—and then it is the cheapest way to get rid of loafers." He seemed to have no will-power to say "No," though perfectly clear-sighted to the hollow appeals to his pity, and the fraudulent pretence of asking a loan. He did not hesitate to say as much to the applicant, but the money went all the same. His "loans" to the "loafers" did not even have the effect of saving him another visit on a similar errand.

These statements are borne out by his own confessions, which led him to draw such conclusions as these: "Nine tenths of those who solicit loans of strangers or casual acquaintances are thriftless vagabonds, who will never be better off than at present, or scoundrels who would never pay if they were able." He could not recall a single instance in which the promise to repay was fulfilled,—yes, he could name

one, but on closer inspection of the note enclosing five dollars, he found that *the writer was a patient in the lunatic asylum!* He relates the now famous story about Edgar A. Poe's note, which he indorsed in order to enable that worthy to buy the *Broadway Journal* in October, 1845, and which, of course, was collected of the indorser. An enthusiastic autograph-collector wrote to him :

"Dear sir, among your literary treasures you have doubtless preserved several autographs of our country's late lamented poet, Edgar A. Poe. If so, and you can spare one, please enclose it to me, and receive the thanks of *yours truly.*"

To which Mr. Greeley promptly replied :

"Dear sir, among my literary treasures there happens to be exactly *one* autograph of our country's late lamented poet, Edgar A. Poe. It is his note of hand for \$50, with my indorsement across the back. It cost me exactly \$50.75 (including protest), and you may have it for half that amount."

It need hardly be said that the autograph remained upon his hands.

Now place all this practice side by side with such radical doctrine as this : "I judge that at least nine of every ten loans to the needy result in loss to the lender, with no substantial benefit to the borrower. . . . He (the lat-

ter) thinks his first want is a loan, but that is a great mistake. He is far more certain to set resolutely to work without, than with, that pleasant but baleful accommodation. Make up a square issue,—Work or starve ! The widow, the orphan, the cripple, the invalid, often need alms and should have them ; but to the innumerable hosts of needy, would-be borrowers the best response is nature's,—‘ Root, hog, or die ! ’ ”

Of course all this unwise lavishness, for which he received full (dis)credit, must have been much less than the unknown benefactions to hundreds of worthy objects of which inquisitive gossip took no note, and whose credit is on the books of heaven, which alone can disclose the quiet stream of tender mercies which attended his footsteps, and which left him a poor man where others would have died millionaires.

One of his first employers in New York testifies that he accomplished by sheer industry more than any other compositor in his office, and often more than double for the week, and yet he would *talk all the time*, exemplifying the parallel activity of both mind and body, like the two pistons of a walking-beam. He had his own habits of work. His extraordinary penmanship we have already spoken of. “ Good God ! ” said a new compositor, to whom a “ take ” of the editor’s copy had been handed, “ If Belshazzar had seen this writing

on the wall, he would have been more terrified than he was." When staying at Mr. Barnum's, that gentleman says that he could never write except by raising the desk as high as his head, so that he had a desk of that kind arranged in the library expressly for his visitor's use. This habit must have arisen from his old posture at a compositor's case, where he did his first writing for the papers. We have, however, seen him writing with entire facility at an ordinary table.

His idea of recreation was peculiar. His experiences of steamboat excursions was that they were bores, and he never even attempted a railroad excursion which was to outlast the day. He was a great walker, especially in his youth, when he walked nearly six hundred miles to visit his parents. In boyhood he was an enthusiastic and persevering fisherman and bee-hunter; but in later life he had no opportunities for the latter occupation, and the former lost its fascination. "I had become," he says, "in my poor way, a fisher of men." Naturally enough he confesses himself never to have been an expert ball-player, and that "it was quite beyond my powers of acquisition . . . to catch a flying ball, propelled by a muscular arm straight at my nose, and coming on so swiftly that I could scarcely see it." He was fond of checkers and cards, but



advises persons of indoor life and sedentary pursuits to prefer bowling and billiards. He often "cooled his imagination, amid the sweltering heats of a summer of constant work in the city, with a dream of spending a week amid the lakes and mountains under the dense forest shades of 'John Brown's Tract,' " as the Adirondack wilderness was then called, but he never appears to have seen his Carcassonne. "During my thirty-six years of sojourn in New York," he could say, pathetically, in 1868, "I have seen few holidays." But he had an almost Johnsonian attachment to city life, with all his sentiment concerning the country, and his illusion of his special fitness for a farmer's life. He had at least the faculty of enjoying city haunts and habits, such as his quiet dinner with a friend at Windust's, his evenings and spontaneous levees at the Union League Club (where also he had a room to occupy on the nights in which he might be detained in town). In fact, he seems to have been half-conscious of this himself, for he presumes that if he were ever to have the week in "John Brown's Tract" which he coveted, he "should find it insufferably tedious, the mosquitoes biting superbly, and the trout shyly or not at all, and should long for a return to civilization, with its hourly toils and struggles, its thronged pavements, and its damp newspapers with breakfast."



He had a natural taste for the drama, and in early childhood would enact original plays for their own amusement. When he came to New York he went to see the best plays and acting of the day, especially at the Richmond Hill Theatre (on the site of Aaron Burr's old country-seat); in Europe he saw Dickens in private theatricals. But in later years he seldom or never went, believing the theatre to be on the wrong side of moral reform, of bad influence as a whole, though capable of regeneration. His advice to a young man was, to "Go once to a good theatre, and never darken the door of any playhouse again."

We have spoken of his vegetarian habits, his lifelong total abstinence from a boy of thirteen, his abjuring of coffee because he found his hand trembling on awaking after taking a strong cup of it on the evening previous. Having, with some small companions, surreptitiously smoked a half-consumed cigar at five years old, wherefrom he "was soon the sickest mortal on the face of this planet," he could say, "That half-inch of cigar-stump will last me all my life, though its years should outnumber Methuselah's." And, furthermore: "From that hour to this the chewing, smoking, or snuffing of tobacco has seemed to me, if not the most pernicious, certainly the vilest and most detestable abuse of his corrupted

sensual appetites whereof depraved man is capable."

Mr. Greeley was noteworthy for his observance of the Sabbath. His rule was the old New England one of closing down at sunset (or six o'clock) on Saturday and resuming at sunrise on Monday, thus securing a full day of twenty-four hours for rest. It would have been far better if the paper "founded by Horace Greeley" had continued to build upon this foundation of honor to God and rest for men. He was a faithful churchgoer. It will be remembered that on his first and forlorn Sunday in New York, from his lodging over McGorlick's dram-shop he set forth as a matter of course to a place of public worship. His membership was first in the Orchard Street Universalist Church of New York, till Dr. Sawyer's removal, when he connected himself with Dr. Chapin's. He was not a communicant, however, from conscientious scruples as to the use of intoxicating wine used at the sacrament. His adoption of Restorationist views of eschatology was the product solely of his own reasoning while still a boy in his father's house. Up to this time he had never seen one who was called, or who called himself, a Universalist, and neither saw nor read a page of any one's writings for years thereafter; he had only heard "that there were a few graceless repro-

bates and scurvy outcasts, who pretended to believe that all men would be saved, and to wrench the Scriptures into some sort of conformity to their mockery of a creed." He was not merely a theoretical, but a sectarian Universalist, loyal to his church and minister, and thoroughly identified with its welfare and its work. So prominent was he in the church, that on a crowded night Dr. Chapin would have him up beside him in the pulpit ; and on a Christmas day when the pastor was ill, Mr. Greeley was by general request made the preacher of the occasion.

He tells a characteristic story of an utter stranger, living two hundred miles away, who actually had the "cheek" to write a letter asking Mr. Greeley to lend him a large sum on a mortgage of his farm, and closing with the postscript : " My religious views are radically antagonistic to yours ; but I know no member of my own church of whom I would so readily and with such confidence ask such a favor as of you." To which he replied : " Sir, I have neither the money you ask for, nor the inclination to lend it on the security you proffer. And your P. S. prompts the suggestion that whenever *I* shall be moved to seek favors of the members of some other church, rather than of that to which I have hitherto adhered, I shall make haste to join that other church."

## CHAPTER XXII.

### RÉSUMÉ AND ESTIMATE.

WE have now come to the most difficult part of our undertaking,—to formulate an intelligible and honest estimate of Horace Greeley and of his career. The materials for such a judgment are abundant enough, but they are as diverse and heterogeneous as they are numerous. Yet, we may say in advance, that no intelligible idea of this complex character and life can be formed, which does not find its clew in his very “inconsistencies,”—the only respect in which he was consistent. What he might have been, if born and bred amid influences of more culture and discipline, we will not attempt to conjecture. We must take him as he was,—a child of nature, self-taught, and knowing no education for life except in the University of Experience and the Gymnasium of Hard Knocks. All men must be tried by the same unyielding rules of truth and of duty ; but, before the final judgment of the court is rendered up, every man has a right to be regarded from a view-point somewhat parallel

with his own. We have endeavored so to make up the record that the facts shall be their own best interpreter, or at least enable the reader to rectify our misjudgments. What kind of a man have we found this Horace Greeley to be?

Intellectually, he was remarkable for technical memory, for mental activity, and for clear, racy, and forcible expression. His mind was stimulated to the neglect of the outer man's culture. He was as evidently marked by the stamp of the printing-press from his birth, as Plato is said to have drawn the Hybla bees to his budding lips, though, as is frequently the case with men of special genius, he imagined that his mission was to those agricultural pursuits from which he had been drawn away to the types, like a magnetized needle to iron filings. This is only an instance of the visionary and sentimental cast of his thought and theories, as contrasted with the practical and utilitarian tendency of his action. His was the unusual combination of a speculative mind and a realistic method. His opinions were formed amid a cloud-capped region of rarefied thought and lofty principle; his presentation of details was prosaic, plausible, and at least seemingly practical. He was great in "the economics of life," after the manner of that greater and more practical printer, Benjamin Franklin. He was the "white-coated

philosopher," whose philosophy was as far apart from ordinary men's as were his clothes, and he was at the same time the shirt-sleeved toiler among every-day men at every-day work. Like most self-made men his intellect was distinguished for strength rather than delicacy, either of perception or application. It was the roller printing-press rather than the engraver's tool. And yet he had a keen wit and a Joab-like sense of where the fifth rib of his Abners lay. By a word of homely sense he would often pierce through the most labored or learned argument. But, as some one has said, "He strove to look into every object for examination, but not to look around it." His mind, swayed by his principles, was apt to form precipitate conclusions; and having so done, he always *knew* that he was right, and all the world that differed from him was a blockhead. In forming opinions he was independent of all authority except his own common-sense; and in defending or enforcing them, he could make scant allowance for those who saw things otherwise, and had little patience with fine doubts or discriminations. In controversy, which was his perpetual panoply, his favorite weapon was the mace rather than the javelin.

He was singularly free from the power of tradition and prescription, from the authority of words, or the spell of name or position.



No mere learning, as such, had value in his eyes, especially if he had not found use for it in his self-education. He was a devourer of books, but almost never quoted from them. He felt that he had learned most from the library of human life and action. In this direction his mind was open and just, perhaps more than if it had had more veneration for the past and the accredited. And yet it is a mistake to regard him as an extremist. What was mistaken as a passion for innovation was more properly a passion for improvement, growing out of his keen sense of earthly imperfection and human injustice and inequality. The practical trend of his mind made him a disappointing reformer and an unmanageable politician. He was always in the minority and in disfavor within his own party, because he was not prepared either to blindly follow the leader, or trim his sail to the impulse of the hour,—nor, on the other hand, to wait the slow rising of the tides of truth and righteousness. He was, in fact, from the time of his starting the *Tribune* an independent in politics. He owed no man anything for the founding of that paper, and the Whigs and Republicans were deeply in his debt from first to last. It is an entire mistake and impertinence to accuse him of breach of party obligation. Even his desertion at critical hours in the Disunion epoch



must be judged purely from the standpoint of his personal convictions.

The best clew to the enigma of Horace Greeley's numerous antagonisms of character and inconsistencies of conduct is probably that furnished by the man who, from analytic and critical genius, combined with his intimate and constant relations of a lifetime, was best qualified to judge—George Ripley. "He was one thing through his intellect, and something else through his temperament. He counselled conservatism and expediency sometimes, and was himself radical and headstrong. Principles absorbed him ; men touched him hardly at all. Calm in mental atmospheres, he parted with self-restraint in personal associations. Measures impressed him ; politicians annoyed him. His want of discipline prompted him to yield to his moods, which were many and contradictory, and not to be foreseen even by himself. As may be supposed, his casual acquaintance judged him by his manners, and the public by his mind."

It was a strange personality,—this clear and commanding intellect and strong elements of manhood combined with a lack of self-discipline which amounted to childishness. He never lost the simplicity, the naturalness, nor even the spoiled petulance of a child. He stood out from the world of men about him as

never a man of the world. He was singular, for one in his position and with his experience, in being swayed by impulse, and in saying directly what he thought. But though he always remained himself a child of nature, he developed the most intense and absorbing interest in the arts and laws and relations of civilization. He seemed to feel, as migratory birds feel the springs and autumns in the air, the atmospheric currents of American life and destiny ; and his failure to accomplish greater things was because he was too impatient in desire, and premature in act. His mission, though he would not see it, was to arouse the hunt, to start the cry, but not to be in at the death. His call was to be a Voice in the Wilderness, an awakener of thought and conscience. He belonged to the epoch of the agitator and the pioneer in reform and politics. He was a moulder of opinion, rather than of events.

His place in history we shall not undertake to conjecture ; but it cannot be an obscure or a transient one, for he dealt with the principles of our national life, and with the seed-sowing of our history. He identified himself with the men and events in the great transition era of the Republic. His unique personality will not soon fade out of our national portrait gallery. He will be remembered for his leading part in the progress of American journalism. He

cannot be forgotten, because of his suggestion and influential promotion of social reforms which, however crudely or prematurely he may have presented them, are already the corner-stones of to-day's conservative security. It were curious to conjecture what the result would have been of his election to the Presidency,—whether it would have helped or hindered the object of national reconciliation, which was his motive in becoming a candidate. It seems most likely that it would have proved a suicidal act for the party which nominated him, and that a new Greeley party would have been the outcome, with a new prestige and new impulses, and forcing forward old issues which long remained latent; and thus the whole political history of our country would have been changed. But he died when his work was done.

I think that, with all his faults and failures, he has heard from the Judge of all, "Well done, good and faithful servant." Fidelity was, perhaps, the most marked and undeviating trait of his character. In his boyhood on the farm his brother would sometimes say, when their father had set them a task and gone from home, "Come, Hod, let's go fishing." "No," was the sure reply of that little piping voice, "let us do our *stint* first." And so it was to the end.

He had a passion for reality. He was the great democrat of his time. "Above all," he wrote to an aspiring country youth, "be neither afraid nor ashamed of honest industry ; and if you catch yourself fancying anything more *respectable* than this, be ashamed of it to the last day of your life. Or if you find yourself shaking more cordially the hand of your cousin the Congressman than of your uncle the blacksmith, *as such*, write yourself down an enemy to the principles of our institutions, and a traitor to the dignity of humanity." He believed in the people as the source of all true progress and the conservators of liberty. He loved them with a certain fatherliness which would not be shut out from them by inner rooms or bolted doors in his busiest hours. His heart best took them in in masses—States, organizations, and his philanthropy would save them in the lump.

His non-combatancy was inborn ; no annoyances, or even outrages, from his school-fellows and fellow-apprentices could draw from him anything more than a good-humored, "Now, boys, don't !" He seemed incapable of inflicting pain ; when set at school, according to some barbarous rule, to work out his own punishment by acting as the flagellant of another boy, who doubtless richly deserved a flogging, all the efforts of the teacher could not stimu-

late him to making it anything more than a farce, and an innocuous going through the forms. This, too, was a parable which explains much of his after doings in the great world-school. He so shrank from the thought that any one should be hurt, that he could not endure the spectre of the gallows for the most cruel murderer, nor the possibility of eternal penalty for the most hopeless reprobate ; and after setting the bloody engine of war at work, he almost severed his own head and broke his own right arm by an almost instantaneous interposition to stop it.

His private life was pure and sweet and irreproachable. We know of none of his great contemporaries of the press who gives us such an impression of moral elevation and independence, of as utter disinterestedness and generous self-devotion, of "simplicity and godly sincerity." Of his place in the kingdom of heaven, we who differ from him in religious tenets, and disapprove of certain things in him unbecoming the Christian profession, will venture the judgment that when the rough and prickly shell of earthhood is sloughed off, there remains one of our country's most "pure in heart," "merciful," and "peacemaking" (if not always as "meek" and "poor in spirit" as he would have been more "blessed" to have been), but always manlike as he was childlike.

## " The elements

So mixed in him, that nature might stand up  
And say to all the world, This was a man !"

We have already said, however, that the only consistent clew to Horace Greeley's character is in the recognition of his inconsistencies, in the duality and consequent antagonism of his nature, more particularly of his heart and of his head. In taking the size and measure of this man, we find strong points and good qualities enough for the fitting out of half a dozen statesmen and able editors ; and we also find faults and weaknesses enough to largely countervail his virtues and limit his success, and to give to his dramatic career too much the aspect of a tragi-comedy ; to make him, in a sense, an Esau among men, and in another sense a leader and commander of the people, the best hated and the best loved man of his time, the educator of a nation,—and yet unrecognized and repudiated. No man was ever more independent of the mere *vox populi*, and yet none thirsted more for appreciation, asking recognition, though not reward of men ; keenly sensitive of personal treatment, and perhaps too much influenced by it as regarded persons, but never as regarded principles or public conduct, he had the stuff of martyrs, and was conscious of a martyr's pains, though not claiming a martyr's crown.



He was equally an egoist and an altruist ; he was a despotic assertor of universal liberty ; he was the imperious Tribune of the people ; he was a compulsory philanthropist. His philosophy was peace, but his enforcement of it was war ; its teaching was democracy, but its practice was autocracy ; he was belligerent when men cried peace, but a pacificator when their voice was still for war. He was a modern knight-errant in his championship of the weak and oppressed, and in all true chivalry of soul, and yet a Don Quixote in person, and in his oftentimes incapacity to distinguish windmills from giants. He was the strangest mixture of womanly gentleness and an almost savage ferocity. One of his best friends speaks of his "social savagery." Like many a great actor on the mimic stage, he thought he was just what he was not—a diplomatist, an executive, a practical legislator, instead of a prophet, a critic, and a public censor.

He was the editor everywhere, always emitting editorials, informing, directing, impelling, oracular. There was no such word as subordination in his dictionary after he had won his spurs. He must be "*aut Cæsar, aut nullus.*" He was so profound an emancipationist, with (if you please) so morbid a desire to have all men enjoy the utmost possible liberty, and to have all restrictions removed, as far as



practicable, that he, perhaps prematurely, applied it to the slave-holders as he had asserted it for the slaves.

But amid all the seeming confusion and paradox of Horace Greeley's character and career, his course was always guided by certain fixed stars of Truth and Duty, Righteousness and Mercy. His reckonings may not have been always correctly taken, but in his most devious ways his aim was always "God's, his Country's, and Mankind's." He was as honest as "Old Abe," as fearless as John Adams, as wise for other men as Franklin, as unselfishly patriotic as the Father of his Country; he was a Luther whose words were half battles, and a Melancthon whose word was all for peace with purity and truth. He was rude of speech like Brutus, but he reserved the sharpest dagger for himself whenever it pleased his country to need the death of his good name. And, after all, his bark was always worse than his bite. He was, as we have said, the Boythorne of American politics and journalism. Behind all his impetuous exaggeration of speech and epithet, there was a heart as tender, merciful, and pacific as the Quaker poet's.

We think it is fast becoming the *consensus* of all candid and discriminating minds that Horace Greeley, however mistaken or impractical,

was from first to last "a man of earnest principle, of broad humanity, and inflexible principle," whose sincerity and integrity are not to be questioned. Here is the testimony of one who, more and longer than any one else, had the opportunity to know him at his best and at his worst, as a friend and as a foe. Mr. Charles A. Dana said, some years ago : " Those who have examined the history of this remarkable man, and who know how to estimate the friendlessness, the disabilities, and the disadvantages which surrounded his childhood and youth ; the scanty opportunities, rather the absence of all opportunity of education ; the destitution and loneliness amid which he struggled for the possession of knowledge, and the unflinching zeal and pertinacity with which he provided for himself the materials for intellectual growth, will heartily echo the popular judgment that he was indeed a man of genius, marked out from his cradle to inspire, animate, and instruct others." And very recently Mr. Dana has thus spoken in the editorial columns of the *Sun* : " What a noble and useful career it was ! Even the final failure, and the tragic end which disappointment brought upon him, contained nothing foolish or ignoble. . . . No citizen has ever exceeded him in virtue, in fidelity to the principles of freedom and progress, in unswerving

devotion to the Republic, or in love for that great unity of humanity in which every individual is but a fragment, an atom, seen for the passing hour, and living and acting but to disappear at last."

Horace Greeley's imperfections lay upon the surface ; his follies were worn upon his sleeve for daws to peck at. We all have our foibles and our faults, and cannot afford to cast stones upon his grave,—certainly not until we can say that we have been as sincere in motive, as pure in heart, and as self-denying in life ; and then we shall not wish to do it. Let us rather contribute the stones for that seemly monument which has so long waited. And let it stand beside Franklin's in that Printing-house Square where his heart and work were centred, and where he looked down from the *Tribune* windows upon the hurrying throngs of the city that he loved, and the people for whom he lived and died. And let his fond ambition there find a more conspicuous realization, " That the stone which covers my ashes may bear to future eyes the still intelligible inscription, 'FOUNDER OF THE NEW YORK TRIBUNE.' "

My delicate and difficult task is done, and I submit it to the judgment of men in the same spirit in which the life itself, of which

this is the record, was lived in their sight. Mr. Greeley once wrote : " I envy the biographer of Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning." Why ? Because the elements had all conspired to make their married life one unmarred dream of love, romance, and poetry, of perfect sympathy and mutual helpfulness, of worldly prospering and artistic growth, crowned by sweet memories and eternal hopes. His own experience was a very different one ; but it has been one of the supreme satisfactions of my life to have been assigned to be the biographer of Horace Greeley. I cannot regard his life to have been in any sense a failure. As an editor, surely not, when he has left as his real monument a paper so clean, so cultured, and so comprehensive as the *Tribune*,—unquestionably to-day, as in his day, one of the greatest journalistic powers in this land. Still less a failure, if we try him by his own noble ideal alike of the editor and the reformer : " He who, by voice or pen, strikes his best blow at the impostures and vices whereby our race is debased and paralyzed, may close his eyes in death, consoled and cheered by the reflection that he has done what he could for the emancipation and elevation of mankind."

As a politician he was surely not a failure, when we consider his share in the grandest achievement of modern times,—the casting of

the devil out of our own fair South, and the bringing of her back, clothed and in her right mind, to the feet of the Union. Here also we may use his own words : " If the designation of politician is a discreditable one, I trust I have done nothing toward making it so. If to consider not only what is desirable, but what is possible as well ; if to consider in what order desirable ends can be attained, and attempt them in that order ; if to seek one good so as not to undo another,—if either or all of these constitute one a politician, I do not shrink from the appellation." The secret of his good conscience at the close, as of his power during the course of his great career, was simply that alike of Psalmist and apostle, " Having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, '*I believed, therefore have I spoken ;*' we also believe, and therefore speak." No man's life can be a failure who can say, as he looks back over fifty-seven years of it, such words as these :

" My life has been busy and anxious, but not joyless. Whether it shall be prolonged few or more years, I am grateful that it has endured so long, and that it has abounded in opportunities for good not wholly unimproved, and in experiences of the nobler as well as the baser impulses of human nature. I have been spared to see the end of giant wrongs, which I once deemed invincible in this century, and

to note the silent upspringing and growth of principles and influences which I hail as destined to root out some of the most flagrant and pervading influences that yet remain.

. . . So, looking calmly, yet humbly, for that close of my mortal career which cannot be far distant, I reverently thank God for the blessings vouchsafed me in the past ; and with an awe that is not fear, and a consciousness of demerit which does not exclude hope, await the opening before my steps of the gates of the Eternal World."





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